

## Barak launches electoral coalition

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli opposition leader Ehud Barak on Monday launched his new electoral coalition intended to oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the polls on May 17. Flags, fireworks and a slide show of the life of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin kicked off the inaugural convention of Barak's One Israel movement, an alliance of his Labour Party and smaller social welfare and religious parties. "We will restart the peace process from a position of strength and responsibility," Barak told a cheering crowd. "We will bring a lasting peace." Recent polls have shown Barak pulling ahead of the right-wing Likud Party incumbent Netanyahu by some five percentage points in a head-to-head run-off.

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## Khatami to visit S. Arabia after Haj

LONDON (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has told Saudi Arabia's King Fahd that he planned to visit Saudi Arabia after the end of the Haj season, Iranian television reported on Monday. The report, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, said the news was conveyed to the Saudi monarch in a letter from Khatami delivered by Iran's ambassador to Riyadh. "Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has said he will visit Saudi Arabia once the rites of the Haj are completed," the BBC quoted Iranian television as saying. Khatami would be the highest ranking Iranian official since the 1979 Islamic revolution to visit Saudi Arabia.

## Royal decree appoints senators

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued on Monday appointing former Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and former Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani as senators effective March 17. Another Royal Decree issued on Monday accepted the resignation of Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti and Adnan Abu Odeh. His Majesty King Abdullah's advisor for political affairs, from the Senate as of March 4 and 10, respectively.

## U.S. to give 100,000 tonnes of food to N. Korea

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States will send some \$35 million in food aid to North Korea to alleviate long-running shortages there, the State Department said Monday. Spokesman James Foley said Washington would send 100,000 metric tonnes of corn and corn-soy blend through the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP). The WFP "has concluded that the food situation is dire" in North Korea, he said. Another official estimated the value of the new shipment at about \$35 million. Foley denied any link between the aid and North Korea's agreement last week to allow U.S. inspections of a suspected nuclear weapons facility in the tightly closed country.

## U.S. sets initial retaliation list in EU beef dispute

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States targeted more than \$900 million of European Union (EU) goods for possible retaliation on Monday as it tried to force a resolution to a 10-year-old dispute over hormone-treated beef. In a telephone news conference with reporters, special U.S. trade negotiator for agriculture Peter Scher said a large portion of the preliminary list, which will be finalised sometime in early June, targets EU meat products and other agricultural goods for retaliation.

## 'Pinochet had million-dollar bank account'

MEXICO CITY (R) — Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, awaiting an extradition decision from Britain's highest court, maintained a million-dollar bank account in the United States in 1997, a Mexican newspaper reported on Monday. If proven true, the existence of the account would raise questions about the origin of the funds and whether there should be an investigation. The newspaper said it conducted an exclusive investigation and turned up what it said was primary evidence that Pinochet held bank accounts outside Chile, including a joint one with his wife Lucia Hiriart at Riggs Bank in the United States.

## Convicts tunnel out of Colombian prison

BOGOTA (R) — At least 17 prisoners, including drug traffickers and leftist guerrillas, tunneled out of a Colombian jail in the southwestern city of Cali on Monday and fled through drains and sewers, police said. Local media said the tunnel, which connected with the city drainage system, was at least 300 metres long. Police could not confirm this. "At least 17 prisoners have fled. They built a tunnel which linked into the drains," a Cali police spokesman said. "We are searching the sewers because it seems some of the prisoners may still be down there."

## King thanks nation for support, pledges to strengthen democracy

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday evening thanked the people of Jordan for their sincerity and steadfastness during what he called the "ordeal" of losing the nation's leader.

Speaking to the nation on Jordan Television, King Abdullah said that following the 40-day period of mourning at the passing away of King Hussein on Feb. 7, he wished to express the gratitude of the Hashemite family to Jordanians in the Kingdom and abroad for having "faced the grave event with patience, alertness and coherence and with a sense of responsibility."

In carrying out the message of the late King Hussein, King Abdullah said, he pledged to

pursue the nation's progress "in a framework of consultation and participation." The King said this pursuit would be based on fundamental principles including the respect of the Constitution and the protection of the democratic process.

He said Jordan would continue to support its brothers, the Palestinian people, in their quest to regain their rights and establish an independent state on their national soil.

Referring to brotherly countries faced with U.N.-imposed economic sanctions, King Abdullah said Jordan looked forward to the lifting of these sanctions. He reiterated the Kingdom's stand on not interfering in the internal affairs of

any country while insisting that no one interfere in the internal affairs of Jordan.

He concluded his address to the nation saying that his speech was an outline of the process of the coming days and that he hoped for God's grace in helping the Kingdom achieve success.

Following is an unofficial translation of the text of King Abdullah's address.

I found it most appropriate 40 days after the passing away of the late King Hussein, may God have mercy on him, to express to you thanks, appreciation and pride in you my kinsmen, the clan and the great one Jordanian family of all origins in all towns of the homeland,

the countryside and badia and in every part of the globe.

You have proved to be, as Al Hussein wished you to be, fulfilling your commitment to Jordan, a unique example in loyalty and authenticity, belonging, ability to surmount the ordeal with extreme vitality, and with the spirit of the one coherent family which united for the good and belonging to the homeland.

You also won world admiration and appreciation, as you presented to the entire world the bright picture of Jordan, as a state of constitutional institutions, capable of facing up to challenges with strength, firmness and clear vision.

(Continued on page 2)

## King, Qatari emir to discuss boosting political, economic ties

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — His Majesty King Abdullah and Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani on Tuesday will discuss enhancing political and economic ties and the stalled Middle East peace process, an official source said Monday.

Regional and international issues including the Arab-Israeli peace process and the continuing U.S.-Iraq crisis will also figure high on the summit agenda, the source said.

According to a government official, Sheikh Hamad's visit to Jordan is "significant, because it is aimed at rearranging the economic agenda to help boost the Kingdom's performance."

The emir will be accompanied by his foreign minister and other senior officials.

Although the officials declined to elaborate on the issues to be raised during the talks Tuesday, they said economic relations are certain to top the agenda.

HRH Prince Hassan visited Qatar in 1997 in a bid to encourage Qatari investments in the Kingdom, help increase the number of Jordanians working in the emirate, and seek the resumption of financial aid to Jordan, which was suspended after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

The two countries had agreed to set up a liaison office in Doha to coordinate and promote investment and business opportunities in Jordan, especially in the areas of tourism, industry, transportation and banking.

Still, a joint Jordanian-Qatari venture was set up in October 1997 to build four factories, two in each country, to manufacture foodstuffs, clothing and petrochemicals at a total cost of \$25 million.

Qatar had also promised to increase the number of Jordanian expatriates working there from 5,000 to 15,000.

Jordan appreciates the fact that Qatar was the first Gulf country to officially open its markets to Jordanian labourers," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

After the one-day official talks, King Abdullah and Her Majesty Queen Rania will host the emir in Amman for a two-day private visit.

amount was never disbursed." Still, a joint Jordanian-Qatari venture was set up in October 1997 to build four factories, two in each country, to manufacture foodstuffs, clothing and petrochemicals at a total cost of \$25 million.

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## Netanyahu raises technology leaks to Iran with Primakov

MOSCOW (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu raised leaks of sensitive Russian missile technology to Iran on Monday during talks with his counterpart Yevgeny Primakov.

The Israeli prime minister said the two men had "discussed measures that would increase our confidence" in Russian efforts to stem the illicit flow of missile know-how to the Gulf state, seen as a threat to national security by Israel.

"Mr. Primakov assured us that this is an interest Russia shares with us," Netanyahu said referring to non-proliferation of missile technology.

"According to our knowledge, Iran doesn't have the missiles to hit the territory of Israel," he said.

The export of missile and

nuclear technology to Tehran is a long-running sore affecting ties between the two capitals and has also dogged Moscow's relations with Washington, which regards Iran as a rogue state.

For his part Primakov said: "I can quite clearly and unequivocally say that Russia observes all international norms relating to export controls and does everything necessary to exclude any leaks that would help the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

"It has been and remains our policy," he said.

Earlier, Netanyahu said Israel could work with Russia over the troubled Middle East peace process, praising Primakov for his in-depth knowledge of the region.

"Of course we are very

happy to discuss the matters of the Middle East because you are an expert," Netanyahu told Primakov, a former foreign minister with close ties to a number of Arab leaders in the region.

"I feel we can talk very comfortably... with someone who understands our neighbourhood very well," the Israeli leader said.

Russia is a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace accords signed between Israel and the Palestinians, although Moscow continues to play second fiddle to Washington in the region.

The troubled peace accords face a new threat, Netanyahu vowing a tough response should Palestinian President Yasser Arafat push ahead with a plan to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state in May.

## Arafat, Chirac discuss Palestinian statehood

PARIS (AFP) — The possibility of Palestinians declaring statehood on May 4 despite Israeli objections was the focus of talks Monday between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and French President Jacques Chirac.

During over an hour of talks the two leaders "went over the context of a May 4 declaration of independence and reflected on the best way of helping all sides to clear this hurdle and of boosting the peace process," Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said.

Asked by reporters if he was seeking international guarantees to postpone the May 4 declaration, Arafat merely said that "a precise and honest application of [earlier] decisions" was

necessary. He recalled that in compliance with the Oslo accords, the Palestinian National Authority had the right to declare statehood after five years but said the proclamation was the responsibility of all parties to the accord.

"This is not for me to decide alone," he said.

Arafat, on a tour of European capitals and the United States to discuss the May 4 date, has hinted several times in the last few days that the proclamation of a Palestinian state could be delayed.

Israel has threatened to annex parts of the West Bank if the Palestinians go ahead with the proclamation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on a

visit to Moscow, vowed a tough response should Arafat push ahead with a plan to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state in May.

"I am issuing a new warning to the Palestinian Authority: Israel will react in the toughest possible way in the event of a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," Netanyahu told Israel Radio on Sunday.

Arafat left Paris for Washington in the early afternoon after meeting French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. No details were available about the Palestinian leader's talks with the premier.

In Washington, Arafat is to meet with President Bill Clinton.

Arafat had arrived in

Paris from Sweden where top officials advised him to postpone plans to declare independence on May 4, when the interim peace accords signed with Israel expire.

France supports Palestinian rights to self-determination but Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine has questioned whether the state of Palestine should be declared on May 4, saying such a proclamation should be made "in the best conditions."

In Stockholm, Arafat was told Sweden fully believes Palestinians have the right to declare statehood but that timing was important.

Arafat has also visited Greece and Austria as part of his six-day tour to discuss the May 4 date. He will wrap it up in Ottawa.

## Party leaders upbeat ahead of first meeting with prime minister

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Political party leaders on Monday prepared for an upcoming meeting with Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh amid unusual, though moderate, optimism that the new government will listen and introduce wider freedoms.

The Higher Committee for Coordination among the Opposition Parties, grouping 13 parties, drafted in a meeting on Monday a list of requests that will be submitted to Rawabdeh on Thursday at his first meeting with all party leaders since he took office on March 4.

There will be nothing new on the opposition's agenda: amendments to the strict press law; abrogation of the one-person, one-vote electoral formula introduced in 1993; a halt to the privatisation process,

which they fear will result in thousands of lay-offs; and stopping normalisation of ties with Israel and intensifying inter-Arab cooperation.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

But what appears to be new is the climate of relations between Jordan's 20 political parties and the government, headed by an outspoken career politician with 10 years of experience as a Lower House deputy and five years of experience as head of the former Reawakening Party.

"There is a positive and relaxed atmosphere," analyst and politician Jamil Nimri, who will represent the social-democrats of the Democratic Party of the Left at Thursday's meeting, said on Monday.

"Political reforms were not explicitly part of this government's mandate (as defined in the Royal letter of designation), but Rawabdeh has said everything can be discussed, declared himself willing to amend the press law, and said the elections law can be discussed, too," Nimri said.

Rawabdeh's resolute rejection of Israel's intention to reduce Jordan's water share this year below the amount stipulated under the 1994 peace treaty won him some precious points among the opposition.

"With the government being firm towards Israel, there will be less room for clashes with the parties," said Nimri.

Analysts agree that Rawabdeh will not have an easy task in restoring political parties' confidence in the executive authority.

Legalised only in 1992 after three decades of martial laws, parties have long expressed disappointment and frustration at what they consider insufficient democratic reforms and lack of sincere government recognition of their role in decision and policy-making.

A "national dialogue" called for by then-Crown Prince Hassan following the opposition's boycott of the 1997 general elections failed to take off due to the inability of successive governments and the opposition to reach an agreement on the agenda and mechanisms of the proposed dialogue. Now, hopes are high that Rawabdeh will succeed where his two immediate predecessors, Abdul Salam Majali and Fayez Tarawneh, failed.

Even the usually sceptical secretary general of the leftist Hashd

party, Salem Nahbas, who described himself as "hardened and disillusioned" by too many political defeats, conceded he was "optimistic" that Thursday's meeting with Rawabdeh would bring some, if not immediate, results.

Other opposition figures were more hopeful. "Not only is there a new government, it is also a new era for the country," said a moderate Islamist leader who asked not to be named. "The dialogue must succeed," he said, because His Majesty King Abdullah, who ascended to the Throne on Feb. 7, "wants a fresh, new start."

Following King Abdullah's meeting with the council of the Jordan Press Association on Wednesday, Rawabdeh declared his readiness to amend the press law.

King Abdullah also met with the

leadership of the influential Muslim Brotherhood on Thursday, and ordered the release of 14 Brotherhood members detained on security charges in the past three months.

Rawabdeh, whose 22-member Cabinet includes two independent Islamists from the higher ranks of the unions, is scheduled to meet with the Council of Presidents of the 13 professional associations on Wednesday.

Analysts have said the appointments of Public Works Minister Hosni Abu Gheida, former president of the powerful Jordan Engineers Association, and Health Minister Ishaq Maraga, former president of the Jordan Medical Association, give the new Cabinet a character of openness towards the opposition.

(Continued on page 2)



ISRAELI SOLDIERS CLASH WITH PALESTINIANS: Palestinian youths carry an injured comrade on Monday in the West Bank village of Beit Dajan during clashes with Israeli troops. Israeli troops fired tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets at some 200 stone-throwing youths during protests against the uprooting of olive trees outside this village, witnesses said. The Israeli soldiers were guarding bulldozers ripping up the olive trees which had been replanted nine days previously by Palestinian villagers and Israeli peace activists, the witnesses said. The army initially razed the orchard a month ago, saying it had been illegally planted in an area designated 'state land' by the Israeli authorities (AFP photo)

## Queen Noor congratulates Queen Rania, leaves for U.S.

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday left on a short trip to the United States to resettle her youngest children, who are completing the school terms they began last year when the late King Hussein was undergoing treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

Queen Noor congratulated Her Majesty Queen Rania, who accompanied Queen Noor to the airport, and expressed her pride in her accomplishments and affirmed her continuous

support to her and to His Majesty King Abdullah. Members of the Royal family were at the airport to bid farewell to Queen Noor.

Also on Monday, HRH Crown Prince Hamzah sent a congratulatory letter to Queen Rania, expressing deep affection and appreciation.

Prince Hamzah praised the Queen's efforts in all fields to serve the nation and its noble objectives.

Queen Rania also received cables from the

president of the Judicial Council and the Court of Cassation, Taher Hikmat, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mira'i Kaabneh, General Intelligence Department Director Samih Batikhli, Civil Defence Department Director Theeb Maani, Public Security Department Director Nasouh Muheiddin, Chief Islamic Justice Izzedin Khatib Tamimi and Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid.



# Blast at Iraqi oil pipeline caused by bomb attack

ANKARA (AFP) — An explosion at a pipeline exporting Iraqi oil through Turkey was caused by a bomb attack, reliable sources said on Monday.

Supplies through the pipeline from Kirkuk in northern Iraq to Ceyhan in southern Turkey were blocked after a section was hit by an explosion Sunday in the Turkish province of Mardin.

Pumping was to resume later Monday after repairs, the sources said.

In Iraq, oil sources said the incident had not affected the loading of Iraqi crude at Ceyhan, on the eastern Mediterranean.

The attack, which did not cause any casualties, could have been the work of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) as part of protests marking the Turkish new year, Nawroz, the Turkish sources said.

Several previous attacks on the pipeline have been attributed to the PKK.

The pipeline carries half of Iraq's oil exports as authorised by the United Nations. It was already shut down from February 28 to March 4, after U.S. air strikes knocked out a relay station in northern Iraq.

Under U.N. resolutions, the larger share of Iraqi oil exports are supposed to

pass along the pipeline through Turkey while the rest is exported from Iraq's own terminal of Mina Al Bakr on the Gulf.

But U.N. experts in New York said earlier this month that only 44 per cent of exports were currently passing through the pipeline. Iraq is exporting at a rate of 1.9 million barrels a day.

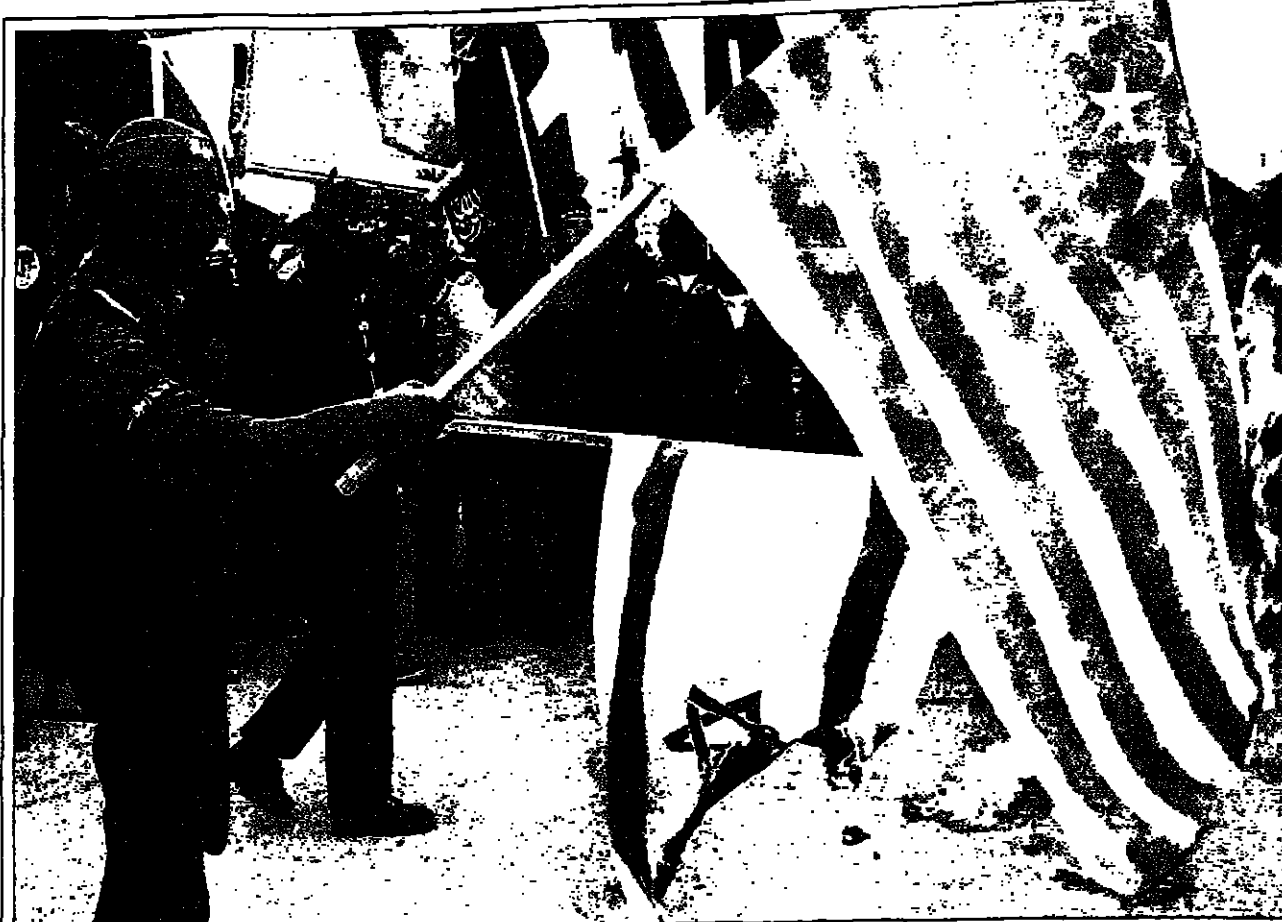
The shutdown came as OPEC ministers, including Iraq, prepared to meet in Vienna on Tuesday to ratify cuts in their output quotas and ease pressure on prices. Baghdad itself is exempted from the quota system.

The United Nations said

last week that a funding shortfall in a humanitarian programme financed by the Iraqi oil exports was forcing cuts on several fronts.

Depressed oil prices and the dilapidated state of Iraq's oil industry have caused serious funding problems for the programme in recent months.

The oil-for-food programme, in force since December 1996, enables Iraq to export oil under U.N. supervision in return for food, medicine and humanitarian supplies. Baghdad has been under sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.



PALESTINIAN PROTEST IN HEBRON: Palestinian students of the Islamic Jihad movement burn Israeli and American flags in the West Bank town of Hebron Monday during student elections at Hebron University. In another place in the West Bank Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli troops during a protest against the uprooting of olive trees outside the village of Beit Dajan (AFP photo)

## Iraq stages mass funeral for 27 children

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi authorities held a mass funeral on Monday for 27 children, saying they died prematurely in hospital due to a lack of facilities because of the United Nations embargo.

A cortege of cars carried on their roofs tiny coffins bearing a photograph of each dead child.

Inside the vehicles, parents wept.

Relatives were among about 300 people who joined the procession through the city centre intoning "Allah Akbar" (God is greatest). "America is the Enemy of God" and "Oh Arabs, see the oppression of America!"

"Iraqi President" Saddam

[Hussein] will avenge the children," they said.

The cortege halted outside the United Nations Development Programme offices and delivered a message for U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, demanding an end to the embargo.

Health officials say more than

one million Iraqis of all ages have since died because of the sanctions.

The government announced that 71,279 children were among almost 160,000 Iraqis who died in 1998 because of poor health facilities or malnutrition brought on by the embargo.

## ECIP offers facilities to help boost economy

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — In a bid to attract more foreign direct investment to the country and to integrate Jordan in the world economy, the European Community Investment Partners (ECIP) programme is offering financing facilities to support joint ventures between European and Jordanian private sector investors.

Every year over \$100 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) and private capital are transferred to emerging markets.

"We can encourage European and Jordanian companies to work better together to create more productive, better quality and better developmental quality projects in this FDI flow hoping that more foreign direct investment will result," said Tom Roe head of the ECIP in Brussels.

ECIP offers European Union (EU) co-financing up to a maximum of 50 per cent

of the project cost and provides funding for feasibility studies, training and capital investment.

"We have no limit to the amount of money that can be spent in one year. The limit is on the number of quality projects with sound joint venture partners for which we receive financing requests," Roe told the Jordan Times.

A country is eligible for the ECIP programme as long as it meets EU developmental cooperation requirements.

"Any sector that is development-friendly and good for the Jordanian economy is eligible for ECIP funding," Roe explained.

Polluting industries and industries military in nature are excluded.

The programme "works through a network of financial institutions, and discussions have taken place between ECIP and representatives of the Jordan National Bank.

Roe said: "We use banks in

Europe and in third countries like Jordan to offer our facilities. The banks know local business, and so we train them in the use of our facilities which are then offered through the bank to local businesses."

For capital financing, banks have the obligation to co-finance reinforcing relations between private sector business and banks.

The ECIP recently began funding government feasibility studies for the mobilisation of private participation in infrastructure.

Jordan's economic reform plan, now in its eleventh year, aims to achieve annual growth rates of six per cent through fiscal and monetary policies, create an investment environment, address structural imbalances through economic liberalisation and foster a greater role for the private sector. This includes promoting private-sector, export-oriented growth.

ECIP has operated in 74

countries for the past 10 years. There are now some 3,000 projects with a budget of more than \$300 million.

"We have achieved a significant multiplier effect. Of the \$300 million spent so far over \$3.7 billion has been invested," noted Roe. "Over 1,400 joint ventures have benefited from ECIP assistance."

ECIP co-finances management and technical assistance to improve profitability. It has helped governments and public agencies to prepare for privatisation on the basis of build-operate-transfer (BOT) or build-operate-own (BOO) schemes in private infrastructure. The programme is active in the Mediterranean, Latin America and Asia, and South Africa. A seminar on ECIP organised by the Delegation of the European Commission in Amman and the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team will be held today.

## Party leaders upbeat

(Continued from page 1)

"We have known Rawabdeh as a daring and bold man," said Ahmad Qablan, whose Jordanian Labour Party is based in Irbid, the premier's constituency.

"We will present the obstacles facing ours and other parties, as well as the problems facing our communities, where university graduates sit at home unemployed for years," Qablan told the Jordan Times in an interview on Monday.

Most groups, including the centrist National Constitutional Party with its affluent membership of former officials and tribal leaders, have asked for state funding to contain their soaring deficits.

Phone lines at many party headquarters have been cut off

for months now, while those which initially waived membership fees for women in an attempt to encourage female representation have been forced to end the policy.

Unemployment, officially estimated at 16 per cent but unofficially placed at up to 27 per cent, and Jordan's chronic water shortage, which may result in severe rationing this summer and losses of up to \$150 million in the agriculture sector, will figure high on the agenda during Thursday's discussions.

But so will human rights, party leaders said.

"There is a lot to be done to make the people feel free, and convince them that they can say what they think," said Qablan.

"Hopefully, we will get there."

## Israel says Egypt ensuring safety of deported bedouin

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel said Monday it had received assurances from Cairo for the safety of more than 600 Bedouin who are to be forced back to Egypt this week after seeking refuge in the Jewish state.

With Israel's permission, the Egyptian army will set up a protected camp for the Bedouin along the border between the Sinai and Israel — a zone which was demilitarised when Israel returned the region to Egypt in 1982, the foreign ministry said.

The Bedouin from the Azazme tribe entered Israel illegally early last week, saying they were fleeing a bloody feud with another clan.

Members of the tribe, a

branch of which lives in Israel, also complained about mistreatment by Egyptian authorities and asked for asylum.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon rejected the demand and Israel's supreme court upheld his decision on Sunday, ruling that the Azazme could not be granted asylum since they entered the country illegally.

As a result of the court decision, the Bedouin are to be deported this week, by force if necessary, Israeli officials said.

Since their arrival, the Azazme have been living in a makeshift camp guarded by the army in Israel's southern Negev desert.

## King thanks nation for support, pledges to strengthen democracy

(Continued from page 1)

You were larger than the feeling of sadness and loss, as you faced the grave event, with patience, alertness and coherence, with a sense of responsibility and keenness for the tasks of hospitality accorded to the heads of state and delegations who came to take part in the funeral of the great departed, you raised the head of the homeland high.

My grief for Al Hussein during those difficult days was only matched by my feeling of pride in you and your honourable civilised stand which will remain vivid in

my mind. I would like to express to everyone of you in every part of dear Jordan in my name and in the name of the Hashemite family, our deepest thanks and gratitude. I stretch my hand to shake your hands and to say to you, your stand was the best comfort to us, may God reward you all with all the goodness.

As for the brothers, Their Majesties, excellencies and highnesses of the leaders and high ranking officials, citizens from all world countries who were inquiring after Al Hussein on his sickbed, or those who came to Amman to take part in the funeral, to give us

their support and console us on his death, I would like to express in the name of the Hashemite family and the Jordanian people our deepest thanks, appreciation and gratitude for their noble feelings, and their support in those difficult circumstances.

Dear Brother Citizens

The great departed has devoted every minute of his life for the service of his people and nation, the building of modern Jordan, upholding the values of right, justice, freedom and respect of human rights. He passed away with clear conscience, it's God's rule for mankind, but he left us his great

message, and we will remain loyal to that message and to the noble values in which he believed, may God have his mercy on him, and to which he dedicated his life to fulfil. The Almighty God has blessed me with the prime responsibility in dear Jordan. I hereby make my pledge to you all to pursue the nation's progress, with all the resolve, strength and knowledge I have, to fulfil the noble objectives and aspirations which you, alongside Al Hussein, struggled to achieve, in a framework of consultation, and participation in carrying out the responsibility and placing the homeland's interest above all

considerations and interests, relying in all of that on the national fundamentals, based on belief in God, loyalty to the homeland, respect of the Constitution, protection of the democratic process, deepening its roots and continuing the building of the state of law and institutions, working to achieve comprehensive development and advancement, remaining loyal to the message of the Great Arab Revolt of freedom, unity and social justice.

Jordan, God willing, will remain an integral part of its Arab Nation, defending its just causes and seeking to unify its ranks, to embody

our conviction in a unity of goal and destiny. So, we will continue to support the brotherly Palestinian people until they gain their rights and establish an independent state on their national soil, and that comprehensive and durable peace is achieved for all the peoples of the region.

As for our brothers in Iraq, Libya and Sudan, we feel their pain under the embargo and look for the day when the embargo imposed on those peoples will be lifted, stressing that we will not interfere in the internal affairs of any country. At the same time we will not allow anyone to interfere in our internal

affairs.

My brothers, kinsmen and clan, these are the outlines of our process for the coming days. I hereby lay it out to you, hoping for success to be granted by God Almighty, for your support, for your concern with work and building, with hearts filled with the love of the homeland, with keen determination and with your heads high.

I salute you with greetings of love and a sense of pride, and thank you again. I pray to God Almighty to protect you, and to grant us success for the good and interest of our homeland and nation.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 473111-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

19:00 .....Le Journal  
19:15 .....Eating and Health  
19:30 .....News headlines  
19:33 .....Thalassa  
20:30 .....Plotlands  
21:15 .....Beyond 2000  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:30 .....Mozart/French

### PRAYER TIMES

04:15 .....Fajr  
05:33 .....(Sunrise) Doha  
11:42 .....Dhuhr  
15:10 .....Asr  
17:52 .....Maghreb  
19:10 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swatfiah, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel.  
4624853/4624811.  
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 4771751.  
Amman International Church  
Tel. 5865897  
German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440  
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138  
Church of Presentation, Swatfiah Tel. 5920146  
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4634757  
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190  
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679  
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052  
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331  
The American Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise and skies partly cloudy. Occasional rain showers are expected during the day with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman .....05/15  
Aqaba .....12/24  
Deserts .....04/18  
Jordan Valley .....11/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 10, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 83 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun .....03/13  
Jerash .....06/18  
Um Qays .....05/18  
Madaba .....04/15  
Petra .....05/17  
Dead Sea .....11/24

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:  
Dr. Bilal Sayyid .....4890280  
Dr. Awad Hawandeh .....5332350  
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain .....4633029  
Dr. Khalidun Asfour .....5332600

AMMAN:  
Firas Pharmacy .....5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730  
Mayadah Pharmacy .....5537004  
Rafid Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:  
Dr. Ali Shugairi .....(02)7100069  
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)75360

ZARQA:  
Dr. Akram Haddad .....(05)985350  
Palestine Pharmacy .....(05)983562

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777  
Fire Brigade .....4617101  
Blood Bank .....4775121  
Highway Police .....5343402  
Traffic Police .....4896390  
Public Security Dept. ....4630321  
Hotel Complaints .....5605800  
Price Complaints .....5661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....4787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....0132  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs .....5661101  
Jordan Television .....4773111

Radio Jordan .....4774111  
Water Authority .....5680100  
J. Electricity Authority .....5315615  
Electric Power Co. ....4636381  
RJ Flight Information .....44-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport .....44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....5921199  
The Islamic, Abdi .....5666131/7  
Hussein Medical Centre .....5856856  
Luzmila .....4630195  
Khalidi Maternity .....4644281/6  
Aklieh Maternity .....4642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity .....4642362  
Malhas, J. Amman .....4636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani .....5607071  
Shmeisani Hospital .....5607431  
Jordan Hospital .....5607550  
University Hospital .....5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital .....5667227/9  
Al-Ahli, Abdali .....5664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3  
Al-Bashir .....4775111/26  
Army, Marka .....4891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital .....5157100  
Amal Hospital .....5607155  
Al Amal Cancer Centre .....5353000  
Jerusalem Hospital .....4367181

ZARQA:  
Zarqa Gov. Hospital (05)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (05)900660  
Ibn Sina Hospital .....(05)986731  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital .....(05)990990

IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital (02)75555  
Roman Catholic Hospital .....(02)727275  
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital .....(02)7101372, (02)7103101  
Rosary Sisters Hospital .....(02)7102831, (02)7102011  
Specialty Hospital .....(02)7103100

AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2040111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53300-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:25 .....Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
07:30 .....Damascus (RJ)  
09:50 .....Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 .....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:15 .....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
16:20 .....Cairo (RJ)  
17:30 .....London, Frankfurt (RJ)  
18:15 .....Chicago, Shannon (RJ)  
23:10 .....Beirut (RJ)  
23:20 .....Madrid (add) (RJ)  
08:45 .....Al 'Ain (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
14:35 .....Istanbul (TK)  
18:00 .....Dufai, Damascus (EK)  
18:40 .....Beirut (ME)  
19:05 .....Paris (AF)  
20:05 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
20:40 .....Cairo (MS)  
22:50 .....London, Damascus (BA)  
23:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
23:55 .....Lamaca (CY)  
00:55 .....Bucharest (RO)  
02:00 .....Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
07:25 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka)

### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
05:00 .....Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
08:25 .....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
10:50 .....Berlin, Brussels (RJ)  
11:05 .....Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:00 .....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:00 .....Madrid (add) (RJ)  
12:10 .....Paris (RJ)  
12:15 .....London (RJ)  
12:30 .....Cairo (RJ)  
19:35 .....Beirut (RJ)  
20:30 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
20:45 .....Damascus (RJ)  
21:00 .....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
01:30 .....Al 'Ain (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
07:10 .....Frankfurt (LH)  
15:35 .....Istanbul (TK)  
19:00 .....Dubai (EK)  
20:00 .....Beirut (ME)  
20:50 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:40 .....Cairo (MS)  
00:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
01:55 .....Bucharest (RO)  
03:00 .....Rome (AZ)  
07:25 .....London, Damascus (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
05:00 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)  
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)



## Rain quenches land, but wells still thirst

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Although Jordanians were optimistic that the recent rainfalls might help minimise the effects of the current drought, officials said on Monday the volume of water collected did not add much to the Kingdom's main water dams.

"Unfortunately, with this serious state of drought, the land is so dry that it immediately absorbs every single drop of water," said one official. "As a result, dams can only collect water after at least two days of continuous rainfall."

According to the recent available statistics, water levels in the King Talal Dam has dropped from 72 million cubic metres (mcm) to 33.1mcm, Wadi Arab Dam from 16mcm to 9.8 mcm, Ziggab Dam from 3.5 mcm to 1.2 mcm, Sha'eb Dam from 1.34 mcm to 341,000 cubic metres, Kafraim Dam from 8.5 mcm to 372,000 cubic metres and the desert and Karameh dams are nearly empty.

Jordan relies mainly on rainwater to meet domestic, agricultural and industrial water needs, which is tapped from surface water sources, such as rivers, and renewable groundwater sources. Rainfall, which dipped to just two per cent of the seasonal average in December and January, accounts for about 60 per cent of Jordan's water supply.

Around 300 mcm of water is used annually for domestic purposes, while industry consumes 50 mcm and agriculture around 650 mcm.

His Majesty King Abdullah on Saturday said immediate action must be taken to set up short- and long-term solutions to develop water resources and ration consumption in order to help fend off Jordan's chronic water shortage, "the most pressing national issue."

The government will declare its contingency plan to cope with the drought, the worst in 50 years, on April 1. High on the list of priorities will be bringing under government control 1,650 privately-owned wells, rationing

water supplies and possibly banning some high water consumption crops, according to officials.

The problem has been exacerbated since Israel declared its plans to cut water amounts to Jordan stipulated in the 1994 peace treaty by 40 per cent. The Kingdom has strongly rejected the proposal and insisted on obtaining its rightful water share stipulated in the treaty's water annex.

Under the peace treaty, Israel extracts 12 mcm of water from the Yarmouk River in summer, and Jordan uses the rest. In winter, Israel takes 33 mcm from the river, of which 20mcm are stored for Jordan in Lake Tiberias for the Kingdom's use in summer. According to the treaty, Jordan and Israel should cooperate to supply the Kingdom with an additional quantity of 50 mcm of drinkable water every year.

But Israel said it was not able this winter to collect the 20 mcm from the Yarmouk because of a regional drought.

The government reported that Jordan's water deficit for the second half of this year is projected at approximately 10 per cent, with demand totalling 283 mcm and supply amounting to 254 mcm.

Official figures suggest that by the year 2000, Jordan's population, growing at around 3.5 per cent per year, will require 1,257 million cubic metres of water to cover minimum needs; resources will be capable of supplying only 960 mcm.

Meanwhile, deputising for Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh, Minister of Water Kamel Mahadin on Monday marked International Water Day, at a gathering at the Royal Cultural Centre held in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development and the Jordanian Environment Society.

Participants discussed means to promote public awareness in order to help save the scarce and sacred natural resource as well as strategies and plans to cope with water shortage.

## Two killed in tanker explosion at thermal power station

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Two men were killed Sunday in an oil tanker explosion at the Aqaba Thermal Power Station in the southern Red Sea port city, the station's chief, Khalid Shukri said on Monday.

He said the bodies of the truck driver and his assistant were charred beyond recognition at the scene of Sunday's explosion. The names and ages of the victims were not available.

"There were no other injuries," Shukri told the Jordan Times.

Fire from the explosion spread to two other tankers delivering Iraqi crude oil to

the power station in Aqaba, 300 kilometres south of Amman.

Two investigative committees, one formed by the company and the other by the Interior Ministry, have been set up to explore the cause of the explosion at the key power station which generates 61 per cent of Jordan's electricity needs.

Shukri said the plant's operations were not affected.

Shukri said the two committees are expected to submit their final reports within the coming few days.

"This is the first time that such an incident occurs in the 13 year-old power station," said Shukri.

## Court cancels limit on taxi ownership

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Higher Court of Justice on Sunday cancelled a six-month old decision by the Ministry of Interior to limit the number of taxis each rank can own, ruling in favour of taxi owners, according to Defence Attorney Zuhair Abu Ragheb.

Abu Ragheb, who filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Taxi Owners Union, said the court ruled to increase the number of taxis that can be used by taxi ranks from five to 15.

According to Abu

Ragheb, the Central Traffic Committee ruled in 1996 that taxi ranks could own 15 cars, but in mid-1998, the Committee issued new regulations limiting the number of taxis that could be owned by the ranks.

Abu Ragheb said he contested the decision at court because the committee made the decision "with a lack of quorum and because the committee made a decision that would harm people's interests."

"The court accepted these arguments and cancelled the committee's decision," Abu Ragheb said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### King receives credentials

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday received at the Royal Court the credentials of four newly-appointed ambassadors to Jordan. The King received credentials of Romanian Ambassador to Jordan Vasile Sofonea, the European Community Ambassador Jim Moran, Tunisian Ambassador Mohammad Habib Ka'bashi, and Iraqi Ambassador Sabah Yasin. The ambassadors visited the grave of His Majesty the late King Hussein and laid wreaths of flowers.

### Hmoud new deputy chief of protocol

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti Monday appointed Mazen Hmoud as Deputy Chief of Royal Protocol as of March 22.

### Man commits suicide

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 39-year-old man committed suicide late Sunday night by jumping from a two-storey building in Jabal Al Akhdar, according to official sources. The source told the Jordan Times that the victim first tried to take his life by slitting his wrists with broken glass, but failed, and decided to jump. He died 12 hours later at Al Bashir Hospital from brain trauma. Official sources said the reason for the suicide was unknown.

### Finance Ministry to reassess fees, taxes

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Finance will begin a reassessment of building, land, and sewerage fees and taxes on May 1 in implementation of new regulations governing their imposition. Assistant Secretary General for Governorate Affairs Lutfi Abu Hazim said the regulations are warranted by economic developments and changes in the use of buildings.

### Muhsen named VTC director

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued on Monday endorsing the appointment of Muzahem Muhsen as director general of the Vocational Training Corporation as of March 7, 1999, succeeding Ali Nasrallah who recently retired.

## What's Going On

### AMMAN FRANCOPHONE DAYS

TUESDAY MARCH 23

Lecture by Dr. Huda Wafi including recital of poems by Egyptian poet Ahmad Abdel Mo'ati at 6:30 p.m.

### FILM

"Ransom" at Books@Cafe, Jabal Amman, at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457/8).

### LECTURE

"Swedish Modern Art in Relation to Europe" by Prof. Torn Sandquist at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 7:00 p.m.

### PLAY

"Beauty and the Beast" at the Amman Baccalaureate School at 6:30 p.m. (There will be other performances on Tuesday March 23 and Wednesday March 24).

### DIALOGUE

Dialogue with Dr. Osama Ghazali, editor-in-chief of Al Siyash magazine, on "The International Political Changes and Their Impact on the Arab World" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Weibdeh, on Wednesday March 24 at 6:30 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

"Amman... A Meeting Point" by Swedish artists Ann Edholm and Hakan Rhenberg at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until April 22.

## Jordanian workers turn focus to estranged Gulf labour market

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Tens of Jordanians are queuing up daily at the Kuwaiti Embassy to apply for jobs in the emirate following the restoration of full diplomatic ties between the two countries earlier this month.

"Tens, sometimes hundreds, of Jordanians come to the embassy asking for vacancy applications to fill," an officer guarding the embassy told the Jordan Times on Monday.

However, according to an embassy official, the embassy refuses to accept applications "because the embassy does not have orders from Kuwait to do so."

"I have been working in the government for 15 years, and I still do not have my own car or house," said Imad Abdullah, 39, electronic engineer, one of the hundreds of Jordanians who head to the embassy every day.

He and others believe that

even if they continue working in the Kingdom another 20 years they will not be able to upgrade their living conditions.

"All my colleagues in the department feel the same, they do not want to remain in their posts," complained Abdullah.

Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations were officially restored earlier this month when the Jordanian embassy was reopened after eight years of fractured relations. Kuwait broke relations after accusing Jordan of siding with neighbouring Iraq during its 1990 invasion and occupation of the tiny emirate.

According to a senior official, Jordan has received several promises from Arab Gulf countries to recruit tens of thousands of qualified Jordanians to work there.

"We are waiting for the implementation of those promises," said the official who requested anonymity.

Daily newspapers have been awash with advertise-

ments soliciting qualified experts to work in the Arabian Gulf, giving rise to fears that the immigration of Jordanians will cause a brain drain, offsetting any capital injections into beleaguered economy.

While some politicians agree working abroad could be a golden opportunity for generally underpaid government and private sector employees, they say foreign companies will be seeking highly-experienced staff leaving behind them the less qualified workers.

However, the majority of people, especially economists, said sending Jordanians abroad is a feasible way to help tackle soaring unemployment in the country.

Jordan suffers from a rampant unemployment considered one of the highest in the world. Official figures place the unemployment rate at 14 per cent while independent surveys say the figure is at up to 27 per cent.

Some believe that sending

government employees to the Gulf will alleviate the government's unemployment burden.

"We have enough excess labourers to send them to the Gulf who will pave the way for others to work instead of them," said Rami Khouri, a columnist and a publisher.

"Seconding them to the Gulf will improve Jordan's relations with the Arab Gulf countries, which is very important for the Kingdom," Khouri told the Jordan Times.

Jordan, a country with limited natural resources, was once highly dependent on Jordanians working in the Gulf who used to send home billions of dollars annually to their families. But after the Gulf war, most were forced to return home after Gulf countries terminated their contracts in reprisal for Jordan's stance.

Today over 300,000 Jordanians work abroad, mainly in the Gulf, sending home JD1.5 billion annually in remittances.

## The Amnesty Law: 'Complicated and incomplete'

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Despite Parliament's endorsement of a public amnesty draft law this week, many believe that deputies have delivered a law that has fallen short of His Majesty King Abdullah's objectives and the government's instructions.

"The King wanted something, the government did something else and the Parliament endorsed something that is totally different from the two," said one deputy, who requested anonymity. "In one word the law is catastrophic."

"I hope that the King will not endorse the law and will return it to the Parliament for further amendment," the lawmaker added.

Among complaints from deputies who object to the law's final form, the most common are that it could cost

the state treasury up to JD20 million in uncollected fines and that political prisoners have been excluded from the list of those who will be allowed to walk free.

Chairman of the Lower House's Financial and Economic Committee Ali Abul Ragheb said the draft law will drain millions of dinars from the state treasury and lead to more deficit in the current year's budget.

Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh on Sunday urged legislators not to include those who committed crimes punishable by financial penalties from the amnesty, but the new law absolves those convicted of such crimes from ever paying their dues, including foreign workers convicted of working illegally in Jordan and those who received traffic fines.

Abul Ragheb estimates that

the loss will range from JD10-20 million.

"This law has not been carefully prepared and I believe it will have devastating consequences on the economy, foreign investment and on our budget," the deputy, a former minister of industry and trade, told the Jordan Times.

"It is very complicated, and it is not easy to implement. It is going to cause serious problems for the government," Abul Ragheb said.

"The law also cannot be described as a 'public amnesty' because it includes restrictions that limit the number of those eligible for release," said Saleh Armouti, president of the Jordan Bar Association.

The draft law denies amnesty to those convicted of participating in attacks that undermined national security or of belonging to "illegal

organisations," namely the members of the outlawed Al Tahrir Party who are detained for different jail terms.

Also excluded are those convicted of espionage, embezzlement, theft, drug trafficking, bounced cheques, forgery, slavery, rape, premeditated murder or bribery and those convicted of establishing "illegal organisations."

"Jordan is on the threshold of a new phase of its history which means that the government should turn a new page, especially with political detainees and prisoners," Armouti told the Jordan Times.

"We cannot describe Al Tahrir Party as an illegal organisation. They and other political prisoners should have been included in the amnesty," Armouti added.

## Businessmen seek to improve competitiveness with Jordan-U.S. Business Partnership

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — Hundreds of Jordanians seeking to improve their global competitiveness are seeking help from a U.S.-funded non-governmental organisation trying to bolster the quality of the country's goods and services sectors.

The Jordan-U.S. Business Partnership (JUSBP), which kicked off its first seminar on Monday, aims to make 350 Jordanian small and medium-size business (SME's) internationally competitive by offering technical assistance.

"We want to make a greater number of companies in the services and industrial fields aware of the programme, of how it can help them and how they would qualify," Lewis Reade, JUSBP president told the Jordan Times.

The programme, operated by the U.S.-based International Executive Service Corps, in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development, provides technical assistance and consulting services to private sector firms and

trade organisations in the developing world. The programme has an estimated annual budget of \$15 million.

A third of Jordan's 4.6 million population lives below the poverty line and unemployment officially stands at 16 per cent and independently at up to 27 per cent.

"Unemployment has been rising over the last few years, there needs to be 42,000 jobs created each year to meet the growing number of people entering the workforce each year," Reade stressed. Nearly 400 businessmen and women attended the seminar.

According to Reade, the JUSBP wants to help SME's diagnose the problems they face, such as their inability to identify proper markets, and to help them produce suitable goods that meet local market needs and to earn foreign exchange.

He also reiterated "that reserves in the Kingdom are good right now. They've [fluctuated] depending on political circumstances. Therefore, Jordan can't depend on aid flows."

Lewis Lucke, USAID director, said that SME's are the largest overall employers of professional, skilled and unskilled labour.

"Energising SME's will help provide jobs for more of Jordan's unemployed," he said.

Addressing the seminar, Minister of Industry and Trade, Mohammad Asfour stressed that greater attention must be paid to SME's "whose role in developing economies is undisputed," as they contribute significantly to employment generation, poverty alleviation and rural development.

The technical assistance programme includes business planning, market research, plant layout, licensing and franchising, meeting international quality standards, and raising awareness towards a "Culture of Quality" through industrial extension programmes, computer-based activities.

"Jordanian companies are looking for technical assistance that help us compete on a regional and international

level," said Karim Kassar, president of Ideal Group, a computer dealership, told the Jordan Times.

"I'm sure that American counterparts can offer such services to local companies. It always helps to have an outsider take a look at any organisation, because they see things from a different perspective," Kassar added.

"In Jordan there is a lack of a highly-qualified administrative support staff, middle managers, people with basic skills that form the backbone of every business and industry represented here," said Sherif Sukhtian, owner of Amman Business Institute, an educational training centre.

"I came here to find out what JUSBP offers and if there are ways we can cooperate with them to help increase the quality of my business and its profitability," she added.

The event was organised by the Chamber of Industry under the auspices of Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Industry and Trade.

## Nabiha Ghosh: The Arab World's mother of the year

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — Saudi Arabia's Nabiha Adeebeh Mohammad Ghosh was designated the Arab World's "Mother of the Year" in an televised competition held in Amman late on Sunday.

She was nominated to the prize by her physically-handicapped daughter who wrote to the competition, organised by the Rome-based Arab Radio and Television (ART) in cooperation with Jordan's Ministry of Tourism.

The competition was held to mark Mother's Day, observed on March 21 in the Arab World. The 1999 "Sit Al Habayeb" competition drew 250 guests to a festival at the newly-restored

Roman auditorium in downtown Amman.

Arbitrators had to choose one of seven Arab mothers — including one who lives in Europe — who were nominated by their children.

The seven candidates, representing the Maghreb to the Levant and the Gulf states, hailed from Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and an Algerian who lives in France.

ART had urged all Arab children age 16 and under to write to their local ART station to describe their mothers and why they thought their mother should win the 1999 title.

From the tens of thousands of letters they received, ART

selected seven entries, and invited the children and their mothers to Jordan for the final draw.

During their stay, they toured the Kingdom's ancient historical, archaeological and religious sites as part of efforts to promote Jordan as a prime destination for Arab families.

Referees had to rely on ART viewers who called in making their choices.

"They relied on the children's description, on their personal appearance with their children on stage and on taped interviews in their homes depicting the mother-child relationship," one organiser said.

Ghosh was elected because of an emotional letter written by her handicapped daughter,

Siham Samir Qattan, and because of affection she displayed towards her daughter both on video and on stage.

Her reward is a week in EuroDisney with four members of her family in addition to a golden ring given to her by a Jordanian jeweller.

"I am very happy," Ghosh said after her election. "Jordan is a beautiful country. I knew it only as a transit country and did not know that it has so many beautiful sites."

"This festival is unique in its kind," said Tourism Minister Aqel Bilalji, who patronised the event. "The idea that children nominate their mothers is beautiful."

## Waste not, want not

### 21 ways to conserve and save water in your home...

• How to spot a leaking toilet. Toilet leaks can be detected by putting dye in the toilet tank for 15 minutes. If dye can be detected in the toilet bowl, there is a leak that needs to be reported.

• Report leaks. Remember, toilets can use 800 liters of water a day; the equivalent of eight full baths. A one-drop leak per second can use 25 liters a day.

• Be frugal when you flush. Put a water bottle filled with water or another appropriately-sized plastic container inside the toilet tank, making sure the flushing unit is not hampered. Toilet flushing is one of the biggest uses of water in the home and office.

• Close the taps. Turn off the water tap while soaping in the shower, brushing teeth and shaving.

• Fill the basin of the kitchen sink to wash and rinse dishes instead of letting the water run.

• Save "waste" water. Connecting the washing machine's drain pipe to an unused bath tub or other sizeable container to store water for toilet flushing, floor cleaning or car washing. Also, make sure you adjust the water dial on your washing machine to coincide with the quantity of clothes you are washing, and run machines only when there are full loads.

• While you wait for the hot water to flow through your shower tap, collect the first cold water in a bucket to use for cleaning floors.

• Use a single bucket to wash and rinse the car, and reduce car washing altogether.

• Break out your broom. Use only a broom to clear outside areas like sidewalks and patios and make sure that gardeners are instructed to do the same.

### ...and garden

• Plant ground cover that requires little water rather than grass.

• Water in early morning or in the evening to minimise evaporation and water root areas of plants rather than watering the entire garden.

• Hold the hose close to the ground instead of spraying water over areas not requiring water.

• Save shower and dish water and use it for watering plants.

• Encourage roots to grow deeper into soil by spacing out the frequency of water. Roots will dig deeper in search of water, and over time, plants will adapt to needing less water.

• Add mulch to soil in areas where decadent plants require masses of water.

• Choose water resistant plants for your garden. If your garden is already planted, slowly replace failed plants with water resistant ones. These are hard to find in Amman. Most plants for sale in local shops are grown in the Jordan Valley (many in green houses) and are not suitable for Amman's cool winters and recent low rainfall, but they can be found if you look and ask for them.

Plants that tolerate the soil and climate in Amman are: Geraniums, Ground succulents, and Broom. Others are Lavender, Snap dragons, Jasmine, Castor oil plants, Hollyhocks, California poppies and Marguerite.

The Jordan Times welcomes your water-saving suggestion. Fax us on 369 6183 or e-mail us at <joirnews@go.com.jo>. Please do your part this year and help save precious water.



## Cyclone Vance leaves trail of devastation

PERTH, Australia (AP) — One of the most savage cyclones on record left a trail of destruction along Australia's northwest coast Monday with 230-kph winds ravaging towns, closing ports and halting mining operations.

But cCyclone Vance was downgraded Monday night from its class five status earlier in the day. Vance was more powerful than cyclone Tracy, which devastated Darwin in 1974.

There had so far been no reports of injuries. But Exmouth, 1,260 kilometres northwest of Perth, bore the brunt of the damage with 30 homes destroyed, numerous buildings damaged and a trailer park flattened.

At Onslow, 130 kilometres northeast of Exmouth, half its 840 residents were evacuated and there were reports of widespread flooding and property damage.

Four oil and gas and mining operations were forced to close while the ports of Port Hedland, Cape Lambert and Dampier suspended port operations.

The State Emergency Service (SES) is assessing the damage at Exmouth. Early reports indicated the town had not escaped lightly although there were no reports of injury.

"By the time the eye passed through, the SES base had received more than 30 calls from people whose houses had disintegrated around them," regional director Ross Holmes said.

"We are expecting very large amounts of damage, although we haven't been able to do a full assessment yet." At least a third of the town's houses sustained structural damage, he said.

"We anticipate there will be a requirement for temporary accommodation for a large number of people," he said.

The Exmouth Caravan Park, a trailer park, was virtually destroyed, said employee Graham McGinness, who rode out the blast sheltering in a shower building.

"Bits and pieces of iron and bits of caravan (are) laying everywhere," he told

Australian Broadcasting Corp. Radio.

"A lot of power poles in the Caravan Park are down, a lot of the vans have been destroyed, blown away completely," resident Maureen Graham spoke of violent winds all morning.

"We've been up here for 29 years and it's by far the worst we've been through," she said. "Our patio's been absolutely demolished and the ceilings from our carport are in the middle of the road."

The Exmouth power station was shut down by Western power earlier Monday for safety reasons. It sustained flood damage, with water seeping through the building, a spokesman said.

The Bureau of Meteorology's Regional Director Len Broadbridge said Vance was now expected to charge inland through the gold fields and exit into the great Australian bight to the south of the continent.

Gale force winds and rain were also expected along a 600-kilometre coastal strip from Onslow to Denham.

## North Ireland leaders prepare for new peace talks

BELFAST (AFP) — Northern Ireland's political leaders were called to a new round of talks on Monday to try to rescue the foundering peace process, with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams saying he was ready to show flexibility.

Mo Mowlam, the British secretary responsible for the province, was meeting representatives of all the parties who supported the Good Friday peace accord of last year.

Frustrated by a year of bickering since then that has delayed the creation of a power-sharing government, she has pledged to devolve powers to a Belfast administration by Easter whether or not the parties reach a deal.

The success of the talks starting Monday depends on the Protestant Ulster Unionists led by David Trimble, and the IRA's political wing Sinn Féin.

Trimble, who is also Northern Ireland's First Minister, refuses to form an executive with Sinn Féin on board until the Irish

Republican Army (IRA) has made a start on decommissioning its weapons.

Sinn Féin insists it has a right to sit on the executive on its own merit and that it cannot ask the IRA to hand over its weapons, which to the militia is tantamount to surrender.

Adams told Monday's Irish Times he was prepared to "try to find some accommodation" to end the decommissioning deadlock.

"If Mr. Trimble is serious about trying to implement the agreement, I am prepared to stretch this leadership... provided Trimble is prepared to stretch with me."

He did not specify how such an accommodation could be reconciled with his reassertion that Sinn Féin was not in a position to get the IRA to hand over its weapons, detonators and explosives as demanded by the Unionist leader.

However, he pointed to an international decommissioning body set up by the accord under Canadian General John de Chastelain

as the key.

"If we could move things forward, we would do so, but it is not within our gift to do so in the terms and in the absolutist way demanded by Trimble," he added.

Trimble, speaking Saturday at a party meeting, reiterated his position on decommissioning, saying that after "a credible beginning" to it, "we can all begin the leave the trouble behind."

Mowlam has said Sinn Féin is correct in saying that decommissioning is not a pre-condition under the accord, which insists only that it must be finished next year, and Unionists were equally correct that it was an obligation to be fulfilled. The problem was the timing, she said.

Leading Sinn Féin member and convicted IRA activist Gerry Kelly was due to meet IRA prisoners in the Maze prison outside Belfast later Monday to explain the situation as the devolution deadline draws closer.

## U.S. experts arrive to monitor encephalitis outbreak

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — A team of American health experts arrived in Malaysia on Monday to help the southeast Asian nation contain a deadly virus which has killed more than 50 people.

The researchers from the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention set up an office and laboratory in the Malaysian health ministry, a U.S. embassy official said. Two Australian experts were due Tuesday.

The experts, invited to Malaysia by the ministry, arrived as soldiers continued to shoot thousands of pigs for the third day in an effort to exterminate all animals suspected of carrying the virus.

Japanese encephalitis, which attacks the brain and causes high fever, vomiting and coma, is transmitted from pigs to humans by the culex mosquito.

With the overnight death of a 31-year-old pig farmer, the death toll rose to 54 nationwide. At least 40 of those deaths have occurred since January in the Negri Sembilan area, 100 kilometres southeast of the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

At least 54 people suspected to be victims of Japanese encephalitis have been admitted to hospitals.

Deputy Director-General of Health Abdul Aziz Mahmood warned that a new strain of the

virus is believed to be transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs.

"Those coming in contact with pigs or pork should take the necessary precautions and play it safe," Abdul Aziz was quoted as saying in the new Straits Times on Monday. "Precautions include wearing protective clothing... this is serious advice." Authorities had earlier set a target of killing 64,000 pigs.

But on Sunday they announced that more than 322,000 pigs in Negri Sembilan would be killed.

On Monday, police cordoned off vast areas containing hog farms where soldiers herded pigs and shot them. In other areas, hog farmers grew impatient and starting clubbing their own pigs to death or dumping them into mass graves to suffocate or be buried alive, eyewitnesses said.

The government issued a directive to local newspapers Monday to stop publishing the gruesome photographs of pigs being shot to death in their pens or mass graves.

As word of the outbreak spread, neighbouring Singapore and Thailand banned imports of some Malaysian livestock.

Although the majority of Malaysians are Muslims who don't eat pork, the country is the leading pork producer in

southeast Asia. Pork prices have plummeted and the government has set up a fund to help devastated hog farmers.

While most of the farm workers and residents who died in areas with infected pigs were found to have Japanese encephalitis, doctors said they also found a virus called hendra in some hospitalised patients. Health authorities are still uncertain whether the viruses were related.

Two animal disease experts from Australia, where the hendra virus killed a horse trainer and 16 horses in Queensland in 1994, were to arrive in Malaysia Tuesday.

"Some of the virus which was taken to CDC in the United States showed some positive reaction with hendra virus," Australian Animal Health Laboratory chief Dr. Mike Rickard said Monday.

Meanwhile, Lim Kit Siang, the opposition leader in parliament, on Monday called for an independent royal commission into the outbreak and what he perceived as the government's slow and weak response.

"I agree that the first priority now is to get the killer viruses under control," Lim said. "But this does not mean that the cabinet should not have taken an immediate decision to have a comprehensive inquiry into the series of failures of disease crisis management."



Actress Gwyneth Paltrow holds the Oscar she won for best actress for her role in 'Shakespeare In Love' at the 71st Academy Awards as she arrives at the Vanity Fair post-Oscar party (Reuters photo)

## 'Shakespeare' takes best picture Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a night of surprises and upsets, the romantic comedy "Shakespeare in Love" won seven Academy Awards, including best picture and best actress for Gwyneth Paltrow.

Steven Spielberg's bloody World War II epic "Saving Private Ryan" won the prize for directing and four other Oscars.

Roberto Benigni, as an Italian Jew shielding his son from the horrors of the Holocaust in "Life Is Beautiful," pulled off a stunning first — winning as best actor in a foreign film. The tragic-comic film, which Benigni also wrote and directed, won additional Oscars for foreign film and dramatic score Sunday.

"This is a terrible mistake because I used up all my English," he said, as he leapt to the stage for the second time.

Paltrow, never before nominated, was honoured for her role as the object of a young

bard's affections.

"I don't feel very deserving of this in your presence," she said, sobbing, as she named her fellow nominees.

Judi Dench, who played the imperious but fair-minded queen Elizabeth I in "Shakespeare in Love," and James Coburn, the alcoholic, abusive father in "Affliction," won best supporting Oscars.

"Shakespeare in Love," which led all contenders with 13 nominations, also picked up Oscars for original screenplay, art direction, costume design and musical or comedy score.

"Elizabeth," another best picture nominee, won just one award for makeup, while the fifth contender, "The Thin Red Line," Terrence Malick's comeback movie about WW II in the Pacific, was shut out.

"Saving Private Ryan" also took prizes for cinematography, editing, sound and sound effects editing.

"Am I allowed to say I really

wanted this?" Spielberg joked as he accepted his second directing Oscar. His first was for "Schindler's List" in 1993.

Spielberg expressed gratitude to all families who lost sons in World War II and addressing his father, a veteran, said: "Dad, this is for you."

The unflinchingly realistic "Private Ryan" had looked as if it might become a runaway favourite early in the evening when it picked up the editing and cinematography awards, which are often precursors of best picture.

But "Shakespeare in Love," with its clever dialogue and showbusiness anachronisms, obviously entranced the academy's voters.

The last time Oscar voters split between best picture and director was in 1989, when "Driving Miss Daisy" won for best picture and Oliver Stone for "Born on the Fourth of July."

## Mixed response to Kazan Lifetime Achievement Award

LOS ANGELES (R) — Elia Kazan, creator of some of Hollywood's greatest films, received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Oscars on Sunday, but many stars snubbed him for what they saw as his making a pact with the devil.

Oscar-nominated actors Nick Nolte, Ed Harris and Sir Ian McKellen were among those who sat, pointedly not applauding, rather than rise in tribute to the director of "On the Waterfront."

They were protesting his having named eight communists in testimony before the House un-American activities committee in 1952, an act that many say opened the floodgates in Hollywood and resulted in hundreds of writers, artists and directors being "blacklisted."

Even though, it appeared to viewers at home that about half the hall rose, they were slow getting to their feet, and people at the ceremony said only about 20 per cent got to their feet.

Director Steven Spielberg was among the many who applauded but did not stand.

Warren Beatty, one of the leaders of the Hollywood liberal community, stood and applauded because of a personal debt to Kazan, who gave him a major break by casting him in "Splendor in the Grass" in

1961.

Kazan appeared to acknowledge the controversy when he accepted the award, saying: "I want to thank the academy for its courage and generosity. I want to thank you all very much."

Then he said: "I think I can just slip away now."

The 89-year-old director did not appear backstage to answer questions by reporters.

Kazan, who won best director Oscars for "On the Waterfront" and "Gentleman's Agreement," was the hotly debated topic of this year's Oscars, with many seeing him as a symbol of the McCarthy era and the days when artists were blacklisted for their political beliefs.

His reputation for being reviled for his political acts while being revered by others for his brilliant directing skills held true on Hollywood's most glittering night.

As the stars arrived to walk the red carpet into the Dorothy Chandler pavilion where the 71st Academy Awards were being presented, a group of about 300 protesters stood across the street carrying signs saying: "Don't whitewash the blacklist" and "Blacklists shred the bill of rights."

The protesters also shouted: "Don't Stand For Kazan."

Harris, nominated for best sup-

porting actor for his role in "The Truman Show," sat stony faced with his arms crossed, as did Nolte, who was nominated for best actor for his work in "Affliction." McKellen, nominated for best actor for his role in "Gods and Monsters," said in an interview on ABC television that he did not clap.

"I just sat and watched. A few people stood up but not too many where I was sitting." He described the presentation and the controversy surrounding it as "a piece of real theatre."

Army Archerd, Daily Variety's senior columnist, wrote in his column to be published on Tuesday: "Although those who approved were vocally audible, the silence of those who did not far outweighed them. I was seated in the theatre in Row T, seat 42, where I was able to observe the entire show and, of course, particularly the award to Kazan."

"The applause may have sounded loud to the audience at home, but only about 20 per cent of the audience stood, and no one at all in my aisle or the one in front of me."

Archerd, a veteran Hollywood observer, also said: "The joy and exuberance of Sunday's Oscar winners was matched by the obvious disapproval for the Lifetime Achievement Award to Elia Kazan."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Ex-President Carter opposes NATO Kosovo strikes

MARAGONDON, Philippines (R) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said on Monday he opposed any NATO air strikes on Serb military targets in Kosovo, saying such attacks would not hurt Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. "Most of the time... there is a peaceful alternative and I don't believe that the bombing in Kosovo is going to be successful," Carter told Reuters while in the Philippines to help launch a housing programme for slum-dwellers. "It won't hurt Milosevic and he won't be killed, depending on the intensity of the bombing and missile attacks. I hope that we can avoid that." Carter lost power to Ronald Reagan in 1980 and has since acquired a reputation as a diplomatic troubleshooter as the head of the Atlanta, Georgia, based Carter Centre. U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke was bound for Belgrade on Monday to deliver a final warning to Milosevic to call off new offensives in Kosovo, from which 70,000 civilians have fled in the past six weeks, and accept a plan granting wide autonomy to the province's ethnic Albanian majority. If Milosevic spurns the message, NATO says it will be poised for air strikes to cripple Belgrade's war machine, avert a looming new refugee disaster and force the Serbs to accept a peace plan already signed by ethnic Albanians.

### Italian PM praises triple Oscar-winning Benigni

ROME (AFP) — Roberto Benigni's triple Oscar-winning film "Life Is Beautiful" won praise from Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema Monday. "As well as great personal success, it has brought honour to the Italian cinema and culture," D'Alema said. "Life Is Beautiful," was written, directed and produced by Benigni, 46, who also played the starring role. It netted three Oscars for best film actor of 1998, best foreign film and best original dramatic score. It was only the second time the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences bestowed a top acting prize for a role in a non-English film — the first went to Sophia Loren, also Italian, in 1962 for "La Ciociara."

### Cambodian police link ethnic attacks to opposition party

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A recent spate of deadly grenade attacks against ethnic Vietnamese residents of the Cambodian capital was on Monday linked by police to the opposition party of outspoken dissident Sam Rainsy. Senior police officials, who requested anonymity, said they suspected the paymaster behind the raids was a member of Sam Rainsy's self-named party and the case would be treated as politically-motivated. "I don't want to refer to any political party in particular but all I can say is that this is a case of terrorism," said Phnom Penh deputy police commissioner Ek Kret. To mark the arrest of four main suspects in the raids, police convened a special parade of the shackled men — who testified to being paid \$1,200 for each attack — and held a press conference warning of further attacks. The seven separate attacks over the past three months have left one dead and 36 others wounded. In each case the targets have been bars or cafes frequented by ethnic-Vietnamese. "The plan has been to order to attack Vietnamese immigrants in order to force them home," Ek Kret said. Sam Rainsy has frequently been alleged to have indirect links with attacks against ethnic-Vietnamese, a charge he has always denied.

### Death toll from rebel invasion of S. Leone capital sharply up

FREETOWN (AFP) — An estimated 6,350 corpses have been buried in mass graves in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown since rebels invaded the city in January, health authorities announced on Monday. The death toll was more than 1,000 higher than estimate by the United Nations that more than 5,000 people died during and after weeks of fighting which devastated the capital in January. An undisclosed number of the bodies had to be exhumed and reburied, according to Arthur Williams, director of laboratory services at the ministry of health. "The corpses had to be exhumed as they were initially and hurriedly buried in shallow graves near streams, backyards and on the grounds of some schools," Williams said, speaking on state radio. He also said authorities "wanted to avoid any outbreak of diseases with the rainy season due about May." Some 200,000 people in Freetown were left homeless by rebel-set fires and bombing raids carried out by the Nigerian-led intervention force, ECOMOG, which battled on behalf of the government to rout rebels from the heart of Freetown. Rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and their allies from an ousted junta stormed the capital on Jan. 6, heavily fighting ECOMOG troops for more than two weeks before being chased into surrounding areas. The rebels have now largely retreated to areas in the north and east of the country, where for several months they have been accused of raping, murdering and mutilating the civilian population.

### Catholic philosopher Jean Guitton dies aged 98

PARIS (AP) — Jean Guitton, a leading Catholic philosopher and academic who was the only layman authorised to take part in the second Vatican council in 1962, has died. He was 98. Guitton, the oldest member of the Academie Française to which he was elected in 1961, died Sunday afternoon at the Val-de-Grace hospital in Paris. Guitton was the author of some 30 works, mostly focusing on the relationship between Catholicism and modern thought. He also was a painter, journalist and novelist. "More than a philosopher, Jean Guitton was a master," French President Jacques Chirac said in a tribute, calling him "a dear and precious friend." Guitton was close to a number of French presidents, most notably Chirac's predecessor Francois Mitterand. He also met frequently with Pope Paul VI whom he considered a personal friend. He was well known for works including "Pascal and Leibniz," which was published in 1950, and the eight-volume "Modern Thought and Catholicism" published between 1930 and 1955. His final work, which appeared last year, was titled "My Philosophical Testament." Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, archbishop of Paris, said Guitton "never stopped prompting his interlocutors to think and to seek truth and goodness."

# Holbrooke says NATO on brink of Kosovo strikes

BRUSSELS (R) — U.S. Balkans envoy Richard Holbrooke said on Monday that NATO was on the brink of launching air strikes against Yugoslav military targets unless Belgrade accepted a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

"We are at the brink... time is very short," Holbrooke said after crisis talks with the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana.

They declared that both the allies and the European Union were totally united behind international demands for Yugoslavia to cease its military activity, but they also called on independence-seeking Kosovo guerrillas to stop attacks.

Holbrooke, who went from the meeting at the British ambassador's residence in Brussels to brief NATO ambassadors and military chief General Wesley Clark at alliance headquarters, was due to hold last-ditch talks with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade later on Monday.

Russia's mediator on Kosovo, Boris Mayorsky, will also travel to Belgrade to try and persuade Milosevic to sign a deal on the future of the southern Serbian province, Russian news agencies said.

Holbrooke said the consequences would be "clear and severe" if the Yugoslav leadership failed to drop its resistance to a NATO-led peacekeeping force for Kosovo.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine both said NATO was united behind the policy which threatens Yugoslavia with air strikes unless it agrees to a peaceful political settlement.

Cook said the 80-minute meeting with Holbrooke was "grave and serious." "We are deeply concerned with the situation on the ground," he added.

He said Milosevic would be told that he had to agree to an international military presence to keep the peace in Kosovo, without which no ceasefire would hold, and to stick to pledges of military restraint made last October.

Stressing that nothing short of a NATO-led peacekeeping force would do, Holbrooke said the allies were well aware last October of the weakness of a strategy that relied on an unarmed observer mission, which had indeed failed in the end to prevent a resumption in fighting.

A force of over 1,000 monitors under the control of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe was withdrawn from Kosovo at the weekend.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said: "We'll support Holbrooke's mission. There's no difference between the positions of Britain, France, the United States and Germany."

"The situation is very serious, it's a last try to convince Belgrade it should sign the accord so that peace can prevail in Kosovo. We have to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe," Fischer said.

Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes, attending a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, said: "It's clear that in Kosovo the situation is extremely tense and that Milosevic is cutting off all the routes for a solution to the crisis."



Serb special police forces walk behind an armoured vehicle with an anti-aircraft gun as they advance into the village of Konjevica in an attempt to clear the area from Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas 12 km north of Pristina in the main road linking Kosovo with Belgrade. Balkan envoy Richard Holbrooke said on Monday that NATO was on the brink of launching air strikes against Yugoslav military targets unless Belgrade accepted a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo (Reuters photo)

## Russia warns against NATO air strikes

MOSCOW (AP) — Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov warned Monday that Russia is totally opposed to possible NATO air attacks against Yugoslavia and said efforts to find a political solution must not be abandoned.

"We are categorically against the use of force against Yugoslavia. We believe that political levers to influence the situation are far from being exhausted yet," Primakov told reporters after meeting with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Asked if his departure for the United States on Tuesday on a state visit might be postponed because of the situation in Kosovo, Primakov was evasive.

"I hope there will be no raids," he responded.

NATO has warned it may use force if Milosevic does not accept a political interim settlement in the province where Yugoslav forces are battling separatist guerrillas.

Russia, an ally of Yugoslavia, has argued for months against the use of force, saying only a political solution can work.

Moscow is keen to retain its political influence in the region and still sees NATO as a threat to its own security.

Warning against the use of force, Primakov said: "That would have an irreparable destabilising effect on the situation in Kosovo, the former Yugoslavia, Europe and the whole world."

Moscow is also unhappy about the global dominance of the United States at a time when Russian power is dwindling.

Moscow briefly recalled its ambassadors from the United States and Britain last year to protest against Anglo-American air and missile strikes against Iraq. But Moscow, with its armed forces close to collapse and its economy in ruins, can do little beyond protest against any possible use of force.

A political solution was still possible and remained the only hope of ending the fighting in Kosovo, Primakov said.

"We must attract the sides to the negotiation table, make mutual concessions and compromises," he said.

## Myanmar junta member arrives in Laos

HANOI (AFP) — Myanmar junta First Secretary Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt arrived in Vientiane Monday for a three-day visit to Laos for talks likely to centre on ASEAN affairs, diplomats said.

Talks with high ranking Lao officials may also cover trade and drugs issues and be joined by Myanmar Foreign Minister Win Aung who is already in Laos, sources in the capital said.

Khin Nyunt, who heads Myanmar's military intelligence, is also likely to discuss anti-narcotics efforts during the visit.

"They regard Myanmar as an important country because of their common border and they are working hard on narcotics issues," said one Western diplomat.

The two countries are the newest members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which also groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Myanmar is at the centre of a row between ASEAN and the European Union which threatens planned talks between the two groupings scheduled next week in Berlin.

Europe accuses Myanmar of severe human rights abuses and wants it to offer concessions to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party which won a landslide election victory in 1990, but has been denied power by the military.

Laos and Myanmar form two corners of the infamous "Golden Triangle" opium growing region, which also includes Thailand.

Myanmar's claims that it is serious about fighting drug production and trafficking were boosted last month when world police body Interpol offered a strong endorsement of its anti-narcotics drive at a conference in Yangon.

## U.N. rights commission opens in Geneva; pressure to condemn China

GENEVA (AFP) — The U.N. Human Rights Commission opened its annual six-week session in Geneva on Monday, with China once more in the spotlight.

The commission, the U.N.'s main human rights organ, has a broad mandate, enabling it to examine any theme touching on the basic freedoms of men, woman and children that are enshrined in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.

As was the case last year, neither the European Union (EU) nor the United States are expected to submit a resolution condemning human rights abuses in China, despite mounting pressure from global rights groups.

Human rights defenders argue that the tactic of dialogue promoted by the two trade superpowers has failed to produce progress — if anything, they say, China has backtracked on human rights by arresting scores of pro-democracy activists.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin is not expected to speak before the commission when he arrives in Geneva Friday during an official three-day visit to Switzerland.

However, Jiang is due to meet with U.N. commissioner for human rights, Mary Robinson, who paid a visit to China last September.

The commission will also review the rights situation in many countries, including the occupied Arab territories, Myanmar, Nigeria, Iraq, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Burundi and East Timor.

The special rapporteurs tasked with compiling reports on individual countries are to hand in these documents to the 53-member commission.

The reports, documenting the latest developments, will form the basis of any subsequent human rights resolutions at the current session, which ends April 30.

The commission also examines the rights of children, women, migrant workers, as well as the themes of racism and xenophobia.

## Dissident blasts Europe as Jiang meets Scalfaro

ROME (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin met Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro Monday on his first official day in Italy, but a leading dissident blasted the trip as a "shame on Europe."

Wei Jingsheng said Jiang's tour, which will also take him to Switzerland and Austria, was an "insult to human rights" aimed at seizing business opportunities while ignoring rights abuses in China.

"For these governments to invite the Chinese president to come at this time is a clear insult to the work of human rights," he told AFP at a small demonstration in the Italian capital.

Jiang, who arrived in Italy on Saturday and spent the weekend sightseeing in Venice, met President Scalfaro ahead of talks later in the day with the heads of the Italian chambers of deputies and senate.

"I'm convinced that my meetings... will help develop relations between Italy and China over time," said Jiang in a statement after arriving in Rome.

"In recent years cooperation between our two countries has borne fruit in the political, economic, commercial, cultural and scientific fields, and we look forward to further development," he added.

At the weekend in Venice, Jiang enjoyed a gondola ride amid bright spring sunshine. On Monday in Rome, however, heavy rain forced him and Scalfaro to perform a red-carpet welcoming ceremony under a colonnade.

Officially the trip is aimed at promoting economic and political ties, but risks being clouded by rights questions. Monday morning's demonstration gathered only about 10 people in the rain under a replica Statue of Liberty. Two further protests were scheduled later in the day, one by a Tibetan group in front of the Italian parliament.

Wei, bearing a placard proclaiming "Shame on Italy, and shame on Europe," noted that the visit coincided with the start of a U.N. Commission on Human Rights session in Switzerland Monday.

"Everyone is focusing on human rights, and China is the country with the worst human rights record in the world," he said. Italian officials are playing down the protests here.

"We are a country of free speech. Of course people can say what they want here," Carlo Bruni, Rome's ambassador to Beijing, told AFP. Wei particularly criticised European business leaders for meeting Jiang.

"This is not only a question of trying to attract investment in China it is a question of trying to get people to tolerate the Chinese government's horrible policies on human rights," he said.

"They come to a country and say 'we'll give you this large amount of business if you continue to support our human rights policies,'" he added.

Meanwhile Monday the Vatican's minister of foreign affairs called for "direct, effective dialogue" with Beijing to end a diplomatic impasse which has blocked its relations with Beijing for more than four decades.

"We are ready to negotiate," said Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran in an interview published in the daily Corriere della Sera.

Beijing wants the Vatican to end its diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which has been regarded by China as a renegade province since the two split in 1949 following the Chinese civil war.

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## Dilly-dallying again

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton is already on record that any additional hesitation by NATO on Kosovo would signal a go-ahead for more bloodshed. As recently as Friday, Clinton said Yugoslav forces were "already over the threshold." Belgrade has repeatedly called NATO's bluff to deploy force against the Serbs if they don't sign the peace deal worked out first at Rambouillet and then in Paris. The ethnic Albanians caved in to NATO's pressure and signed the peace pact under the illusion that NATO would deliver on its pledge to use air power against Belgrade if it wages new offensives in Kosovo or fails to sign the treaty.

Yet despite these snubs we see Clinton dispatching U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke once again to Belgrade to deliver yet another ultimatum to the Serbs. It does not take a wizard to conclude that Belgrade has learned to take NATO's threats lightly. So why is Washington trying again and again to talk some sense into Milosevic? Had the Serbian president taken NATO seriously he would have signed the peace deal already. Clearly Belgrade is still counting on NATO not lifting a finger no matter how far it goes in defying it. How else can one explain Belgrade's massive troop movements in and around Kosovo notwithstanding all the "fire and fury" being sounded by NATO.

Most probably Belgrade is calculating that if push comes to shove, NATO's air strikes against it will prove ineffective in the face of its formidable air defences. NATO does not appear prepared to commit ground forces against the Serbs in Kosovo and since its projected aerial strikes would not prove forceful enough to deliver the message, Belgrade is left free to do with its armed forces as it pleases within Kosovo. Unless NATO can be persuaded to commit its ground forces as well, its projected limited air strikes may fail to do the necessary job of persuading Belgrade to join the peace process. The only real option left for NATO to redeem itself and its fast eroding credibility is to unleash sustained and painful air strikes against Yugoslavia and its forces within and outside Kosovo. Anything short of that would simply fail to force the Serbs to reach a reasonable settlement with the ethnic Albanians and grant them real autonomy.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Faded Fanek said that although Jordan needs investors because it lacks natural resources, it is the only country that has opposition to foreign investment and warns against strategic positions. In 1996, Fanek added, the government managed to open the way for such investments, and it was expected that international capital would "invade" local companies and turn their employees into "slaves," but none of this happened and the country failed instead to attract investors. However, at the Amman Financial Market, there is a large number of active foreign investment funds, which own 3 per cent of available shares and at the same time have 30 per cent of the circulation volume, said the writer, adding that these parties, which are ready to leave the country anytime, are only looking for profits and not for real investment. It is weird that some parliamentary, press and party activists accept these yet refuse committed investors, who take part in developing management and marketing and exploiting technology, said the writer. A French strategic partner bought one-third of the Jordan Cement Factories Company and the result was that the number of employees increased, prices became stable, the firm's value doubled, the treasury made JD72 million and the Central Bank raised its reserve by JD100 million, Fanek pointed out.

Al-Doustour's Abu Yazan said the Middle East this year will have to face a hot and dry summer, which will be accompanied by heightened political, military and security tension. The region's countries are looking to redraw their water consumption policies as the drought is the worst in 90 years, and Jordanians will have to be ready to limit their consumption, especially following the recent water crisis with Israel, Abu Yazan said. The Syrians are talking about the drought, especially after the Euphrates has turned into a "gutter" thanks to Turkish dams, he said, adding that the drought will be worse if Netanyahu gets reelected again. South Lebanon, which is far from the drought, is in the midst of a conflict with Israel, while Iraq is heading to the "unknown" and is stuck between sanctions and U.S. strikes, in addition to internal problems, added Abu Yazan.

## Declaring a state, or building a state?

THREE IMPORTANT specific battles are taking place these days amidst the wider Arab-Israeli conflict — the battles for Jerusalem, the declaration of an independent Palestinian state, and south Lebanon — and Israel is losing all three. Very different means of warfare are being used in the three cases: military resistance against the Israeli occupation forces is pushing Israel to seek means of leaving South Lebanon; American-European pressure is telling Israel that the world rejects its unilateral claim to all of Jerusalem and its right to unlimited settler-colonialism in the occupied West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights; and, persistent Palestinian public diplomacy has forced upon Israel and the world the reality that an independent Palestinian state will come into being in the near future.

The Palestinians and Arabs as a whole should grasp the lessons of what is happening these days, and build on recent successes rather than repeat the mistakes of the past. The dynamics surrounding the Palestinian declaration of statehood are probably the most immediately relevant in this respect in political terms.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have been engaged in a fierce war of words in recent weeks over the Palestinian intention to declare an independent state on May 4, when the Oslo agreement's transition period of five years ends. The Palestinians have threatened

rhetorical real war if Israel blocks the birth of the Palestinian state; Israel in turn has threatened to annex large chunks of Palestinian lands and perhaps even to isolate the Palestinian areas if the unilateral declaration of statehood goes ahead.

Many fascinating dimensions of this Palestinian-Israeli disagreement suggest that the most important aspect of it has probably come and gone: the steady Palestinian insistence that an independent Palestinian state must emerge at the end of the Oslo negotiations. The Palestinians have expected this all along, even though an independent state was never explicitly mentioned in the Oslo accord. The Palestinian right and wish has become an international political norm.

By insisting on and threatening to unilaterally declare an independent state on May 4, Arafat and the Palestinians have generated widespread international support for the establishment of such a state in the very near future. Even a majority of Israelis today says that it explicitly supports or accepts to live with a Palestinian state (as long as Israel's security is not threatened, which is logical and fair enough, and acceptable to the Palestinians and Arabs). European states now routinely declare their support for a Palestinian state, but argue that it should not be declared unilaterally on May 4.

Thanks largely to the combination of Palestinian insistence on the right to statehood, and the Israeli penchant for military, polit-

ical and national greed and arrogance vis-a-vis the historic land of Palestine, the fundamental point under discussion has been substantially changed to the Palestinians' favour: the talk is no longer about whether a Palestinian state should exist, but rather about the best time to declare such a state, and how that state could enjoy maximum chances for success.

The Palestinians have achieved this important success primarily through persistent self-control, realism, and moderation — qualities that have not always defined the Arab diplomatic experience. My impression is that the Arab and international battle for Palestinian statehood is being won slowly and surely, and we should continue to pursue policies that promote that goal rather than derail it. The lesson I draw from recent years is that a realistic and reasonable Arab goal that is pursued diligently will always triumph over an unrealistic and unreasonable Israeli stance that is promoted aggressively and imperially.

A Palestinian declaration of statehood on May 4 would be a symbolic but meaningless act, because the Palestinians do not yet enjoy the attributes of practical statehood. Palestinians remain too vulnerable to Israeli security, transport, economic and other controls over the scattered pieces of land under Palestinian quasi-sovereignty.

A unilateral Palestinian declaration of statehood would give

## View from the Fourth Circle



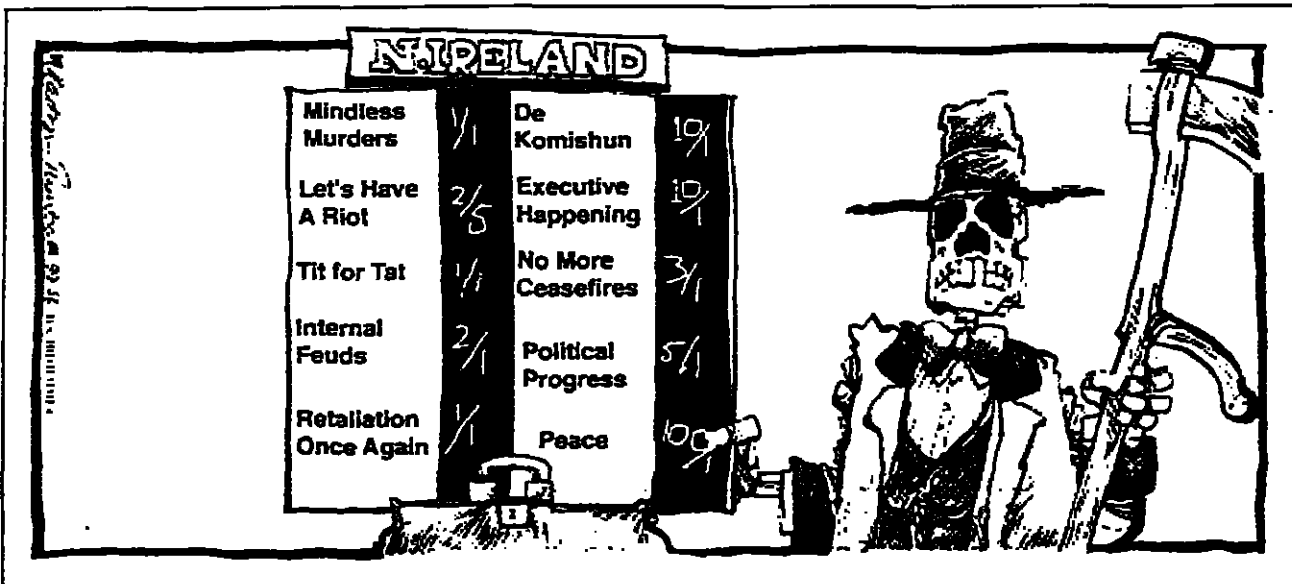
Rami G. Khouri

Netanyahu the excuse he wants to unleash fascist punitive controls on the Palestinians, in order to rally support for his election from the disgruntled, the ugly, and the tormented amongst his people. It would also erode much of the support that Palestinians have secured from leading countries around the world. And finally, it would be a rather empty gesture, made even more fanciful by the fact that the Palestinians already declared statehood some years ago — and they engaged in emotional rhetoric rather than practical politics, in retrospect.

The Oslo negotiating process underway is unfair, slow, and skewed in Israel's favour — but it remains the only process that has achieved some meaningful national gains for both Palestinians and Israelis; therefore, it continues to enjoy the support of over 60 per cent of Israelis and Palestinians (according to a poll released last

week). Arafat and the Palestinian leadership should realise that they are steadily winning the battle for Palestinian statehood, and they have already scored a major victory vis-a-vis the May 4 deadline. The challenge now is how to build on global consensus in favour of an independent Palestinian state, and how to keep increasing the pressure within Israel that will keep pushing the Israeli people and leadership towards the political centre — the centre where reasonable people meet and make deals that are rooted in realism and mutual rights, rather than in the shocking cultural hooliganism and Orientalist racism that are increasingly visible and desperate features of some in the Israeli right.

The Palestinian right to independent statehood is universal and secure. The important thing now is not simply to declare a state in a self-destructive emotional flourish, but rather to build such a state in practical terms in those areas under Palestinian control — and to keep expanding the size, viability and sovereignty of the Palestinian lands until a sound and meaningful Palestinian state exists side by side with the Israeli state. The mere threat to declare a Palestinian state has promoted progress towards this goal: an actual unilateral declaration in these circumstances would probably set it back. This is a hard choice for the Palestinians; so it should be made on the basis of hard realism, not soft emotionalism.



## Bomb the Serbs and betray the Kosovars

By Gwynne Dyer

HOLLOW THREATS and fake deadlines are NATO's trademark in the Balkans, but this time it will not be able to run away. Letting the Serbs call NATO's bluff over Kosovo yet again, as they did over Bosnia so many times in the past, would leave the alliance's remaining credibility in shreds. So you can hear NATO's leaders talking out loud, trying to work up the nerve to drop a few cruise missiles on Slobodan Milosevic.

"The military clock is ticking," says NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. "The threshold has been crossed," says U.S. President Bill Clinton. "They (Serbs) absolutely must move. There is no other alternative except war," says Anne Gazau-Serret, spokeswoman for the French foreign minister. "I wouldn't look at this as a one- or two-bomb affair," says General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

But Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic says nothing at all — and in St. Petersburg, Valentin Kashtinov's website contains instructions on how to make a device for less than \$200 that will jam the signals from Global Positioning System satellites that make cruise missiles so accurate. It also contains an appeal to "the mothers of NATO pilots and soldiers" not to bomb Belgrade.

It would be a very good thing if the Serbs built Kashtinov's devices and sent all of NATO's cruise missiles crashing into hillsides when the alliance goes to war in a week or ten days' time. Not because the Serbs are in the right, or because using military force against Serbia to stop the genocide in Kosovo is wrong. On the contrary, it would be a good thing because if NATO couldn't use its cruise missiles as a token way of slapping Milosevic's wrists, it would have to formulate a serious military strategy to deal with Kosovo.

The problem with cruise missiles is that they are good for everybody except the real victims of this confrontation, the Albanian Kosovars who are being shelled and burned out of their villages by Serbian forces even as you read this. They are good for NATO because they let it act on its threat to punish Serbia without annoying the "mothers of NATO pilots and soldiers," who would get

very upset if their offspring were killed or captured in a Balkan war. The thought of actually taking casualties, and paying the political price in domestic support, paralyses the will of political "leaders" throughout the West.

Cruise missiles are good for Milosevic, too, because he needs a few bombs to be dropped on Serbia right now. Not too many, you understand, but just enough to unite Serbian nationalists behind him if he decides to tough it out — or to give him an excuse for pulling out of Kosovo, if he really feels he must do that to survive politically. And "not too many" is what he is likely to get.

The sequence of events over the next two weeks will be as follows. Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov will visit Belgrade urging Milosevic to accept the agreement for peace and autonomy that the representatives of Kosovo's Albanian majority have already signed in France. Milosevic will politely tell him to get lost. Then various NATO dignitaries — General Clark, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, and U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke are likely candidates — will go to the Serbian capital to give Milosevic his last warning, his really final warning, and his absolutely irrevocable, truly final warning.

"In dealing with aggressors in the Balkans, hesitation is a licence to kill," said Clinton on Friday, but hesitation there will certainly be. Meanwhile, with all 1,400 unarmed monitors from the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) withdrawn from Kosovo to avoid being taken hostage by the Serbs, the Yugoslav army will go on a rampage in Kosovo, destroying as many villages and making as many Albanians refugees as possible.

And then, perhaps a week and a few thousand dead Kosovars from now, NATO will let the cruise missiles fly. But only at Serbian air defences and military facilities in Kosovo province, not in Serbia proper — and probably only for one or two days. Then, in the best traditions of "Operation Rolling Thunder" (the U.S. bombing campaign that failed to locate North Vietnam's "threshold of pain" three decades ago), NATO will stop and listen for a response from

Belgrade.

Belgrade will doubtless combine military defiance with some kind of offer, far short of the terms for Kosovo's autonomy laid down at the Rambouillet talks, in the hope of sowing division among the NATO allies. It stands a fair chance of success, since the next logical step for NATO would be to bomb Serbia itself and if that doesn't work, to send ground troops into Kosovo to drive the Serbian army out.

This is an appalling prospect for governments that implicitly accept the "Mogadishu standard": the conviction that no democratic country can afford to have 20 soldiers killed in combat and their bodies shown on television. No matter how valid the cause, goes the argument, the electorate will be appalled by the casualties and demand that "the boys" be brought home.

It may not be true, but the important thing is that Western governments, and above all the U.S. government, believe it to be true. So it's quite reasonable for Milosevic to think that NATO is a paper tiger. If he isn't cowed into submission by the bombing, NATO has nothing left in reserve, for it is terrified of committing ground troops to combat.

That is why Kashtinov's device would be so helpful, for by writing the seductive but essentially useless cruise missiles out of the scenario, it would compel NATO's political authorities to sort their strategy out now. If they aren't prepared to use ground troops in the end, then they shouldn't have pulled out the OSCE monitors and exposed the Kosovars to renewed ethnic cleansing.

The NATO alliance should be prepared to use its troops to protect the Kosovars. What are those huge defence budgets for, if the troops are effectively unusable? But if it isn't, then it should not have started down this road.

When your bluff has been called this many times, it is stupid and irresponsible to start bluffing again. The principal victims will be the people you are trying to protect.

The writer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

## Footnote

IS PROSTITUTION a human rights issue? I find myself raising this question every time the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in which I am a member receives the periodic report of a country where prostitution is either legalised or exists de facto on a wide scale. Yet all the other 17 members of the committee react negatively to my persistent reference to prostitution as a human rights issue that violates women's right as well as family rights. The routine response that I always get from my colleagues and state parties which defend their prostitution record is that prostitution is the oldest profession in the world and that there is no way on earth to eradicate or prevent it. So why bother to view it as a human rights

issue?

I normally rebut these traditional replies by stating that notwithstanding the obvious fact that prostitution is here to stay, that does not negate the proposition that the phenomenon per se violates the basic human rights of women and is repugnant to state parties treaty obligations for the promotion and protection of family rights. Could there be any doubt in the minds of any of us that institutionalised or de facto prostitution degrades and exploits women and renders them objects? Is there any doubt that prostitution interferes with a healthy and traditional family life? And when prostitution involves children as is the case now, do we have doubts that trafficking in children for sex and their deployment in pornography are clear violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? The

## Waleed M. Sadi

issue becomes all the more compounded when we start talking about homosexual prostitution, the spread of AIDS/HIV and drug trafficking.

Despite all these obvious facts, I find myself completely isolated when I raise the issue of human rights in the context of prostitution. Yet I go on raising the issue and even officially proposed that my committee examine the issue in-depth with a view to articulating and adopting a "general comment" on it in due course. My offer has yet to be accepted and acted upon. But I will continue my crusade at least to have the international community accept to treat prostitution as a human rights issue even though the eradication of the phenomenon is not on the cards.

## Marx, money and moral blind spots

By Martin Cohen

WHAT IS philosophy worth? George Soros has priced it at \$3 billion. That is what Soros, the international financier who humiliated the U.K. in battle over the exchange rate, would pay. It seems rather a lot, but then Mr. Soros has a lot of money, is getting on, and would like to be taken seriously as a philosopher.

What Soros is interested in is producing a successor volume to *The Wealth of Nations*. Baroness Thatcher's favourite book of political philosophy. He seeks to wear the mantle of Adam Smith and to become a philosopher of markets and economics, which he believes, unlike Smith, to be fundamentally irrational.

But there already has been a successor to *The Wealth of Nations*. It was printed in the 19th century by one Karl Marx, and is entitled *Das Kapital*. His theory was not so much that markets were "irrational" as fundamentally flawed. But it was popular for a while.

These days Marx is completely discredited as an economist. Yet, as a philosopher, something remains. (Even if he claimed to disdain the philosophers, and their attempts to "understand the world," rather than change it.)

His theory of dialectical materialism leading inevitably, through statism, to a socialist Utopia looks rather implausible now. But his philosophical points about "materialism" still ring true, even if they are not particularly original. (Plato said much the same, as did Thomas Hobbes and John Stuart Mill, for example). But Marx's cynical claim that the social and political aspects of society are only the superficial manifestations of the underlying economic forces — well, isn't that a new way to look at things?

Take the Gulf war(s) for example. Here we have an apparently idiosyncratic war of attrition in the name of human rights, by two of its stoutest defenders, which seems to have little effect other than to bring about more repression and starvation. But,

seen as an economic manoeuvre, it can be explained very plausibly in terms of maintaining not just low oil prices but also high arms sales.

Or take the criticisms of the Chinese government, for years frozen out of the Western world for their abuses of human rights. Here there seems to be a well-established correlation between concern about the Chinese record and the desire either to protect the domestic markets from Chinese exports, or to encourage them.

Or apply it to the greatest unsung issue of the world, the exploitation of women. In many countries women have no "economic rights." Doesn't that also count as fewer "human rights?"

But this, by Western standards, fairly unacceptable behaviour often occurs in countries which are, by law and tradition, run entirely by men following laws and traditions drawn up by other men, which take moral precedence over any other considerations, such as the right to life, to speech, to employment, to health, or whatever (at least of women).

How would economics explain this apparent moral blind spot? Well, economically, it makes excellent sense for countries that Western democracies wish to trade with to have as inefficient a social structure as possible. And the exploitation of women is very inefficient. In some countries the restrictions on women's social and economic rights are part and parcel of a rigid hierarchy where the country's wealth can be easily siphoned off by an élite to the advantage of the Western democracies. In others, inhibiting economic progress creates the conditions for the plundering of resources, both mineral and human. In these cases, the economic interests, at least interpreted narrowly, seem to favour this particular manifestation of moral relativism — allowing "rights" to be culturally defined.

But then, as George Soros was saying people are fundamentally irrational.

— The Independent



## Swedish Art Exhibition at Darat Al Funun

### 'Amman. A Meeting Point' for Swedish and Jordanian artists

In cooperation with the Museum of Modern Art and the Swedish Institute in Stockholm, Darat Al Funun today inaugurates an exhibition of two Swedish artists Ann Edholm and Hakan Rehnberg under the title "Amman. A Meeting Point." Starting in Jordan, this "meeting point" in the art field with Sweden will continue with a joint exhibition of Swedish and Jordanian artists at the Konsthallen in Gothenburg, Sweden, that will take place in September. Following are excerpts of an article, giving a brief background to the state of art at present in Sweden.

By Soren Engblom

IT HAS been said that the 1980s started with Picasso and ended with Duchamp and that is no unreasonable view. Art has moved from painting, image and form to ideas and objects. Still thriving in the

early years of the decade was a largely undisturbed conception of art with its roots in the ideas of the turn of the century. Art worked with colour, shape and the observation of external reality. There were political motifs, expressionist ideologies of persuasions and meditative spirituality. There was art that stayed within "art," and there was art that wished to "reach out."

It is true that art had initiated great changes with the 1960s. The theoretical superiority of the abstract was at an end. A new realism and a new figurative approach had taken over, with their focus on the mass image and industrial production. In the period of transition there was a lot of debate about "open art" — were there really no bounds to what art could look like? Nonetheless everything still seemed the same, in the early 1980s, as if the deeper changes aspired to by the 1960s had not

taken place. In the cultural life of Sweden the 1970s were harshly polarised. Pop culture was extremely superficial while political art, theatre and literature were cultivated in pure form. There was also a poetic style following its own separate path. The 1980s began with a liberating, thoroughly permissive attitude that lasted some five or six years. Then a new controversy arose. Old contentions were dug up, and sleeping dogs were woken and started snarling again. In 1987, the critic Lars O. Ericsson wrote two masterly articles in defence of contemporary art. They were a reaction to the many unfavourable comments on contemporary art which had been made by older critics over a period of time. And now the debate, which had previously been rumbling under the surface of the art world, broke through into the open.

It is true that postmodernism — a vague and elastically comprehensive term in the context of this discussion — had been a topic of debate since the middle of the decade. At first it had concerned architecture, and then philosophy, where a farewell to utopian ideas had already been sounded in the mid-1970s by the "new French philosophers" Lévy and Glucksmann. (Violent ideological change of direction that took the wind out of the sails of Marxism and gave Liberalism its triumphant 1980s). The politicisation and conceptualisation of art increased steeply from 1987 onwards.

At the turn of the decade, the art pages of the press were writing obituaries for the 1980s... In the field of art, this period very clearly

bears the stamp of Duchamp — ideas and concepts were constantly being discussed in a debate describing art in very cerebral terms. In 1987, the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm staged its first exhibition with the intention of illuminating the postmodern aspect of art under the title of "Implosion." It marked a breakthrough for much new and not least photographically based art.

The economic crisis of the early 1990s claimed a number of art galleries among its victims. Art was not selling as it used to. But without prostituting itself to political ends, a change of stylistic orientation nonetheless took place towards installations, concept art, politics and feminism. The keyword is no longer "project" but "investigation". The 1990s investigated all that lived and moved in the city, the agents of desire and the bearers of social patterns. Where the 1980s discussed "the death of the subject" and only silence and emptiness were left, a new view of the subject has emerged today. Now as the 1990s are nearing their end and the economy is improving once more, stability appears to have returned to the art world. The new ideas have found expression in the art schools, and internationalisation has become a part of everyday life.

The format of Sweden's new Modern Museum (Museum of Modern Art) in Stockholm, inaugurated in February 1998, is unprecedented, and its direction is in the hands of a leading figure of the international museum community, the Englishman David Elliott.

"Everyday life" has been a constant theme in the most recent ten-year period. In addition, there is a whole spectrum of ecology, politics and feminism. But the grand style, sublimity and poetic delicacy are all far from the centre of artistic life today. Artists have an unflinching unheroic relationship with objects, cameras, earth, animals and plants. Film is the most powerful medium of our time — and its made in Hollywood.

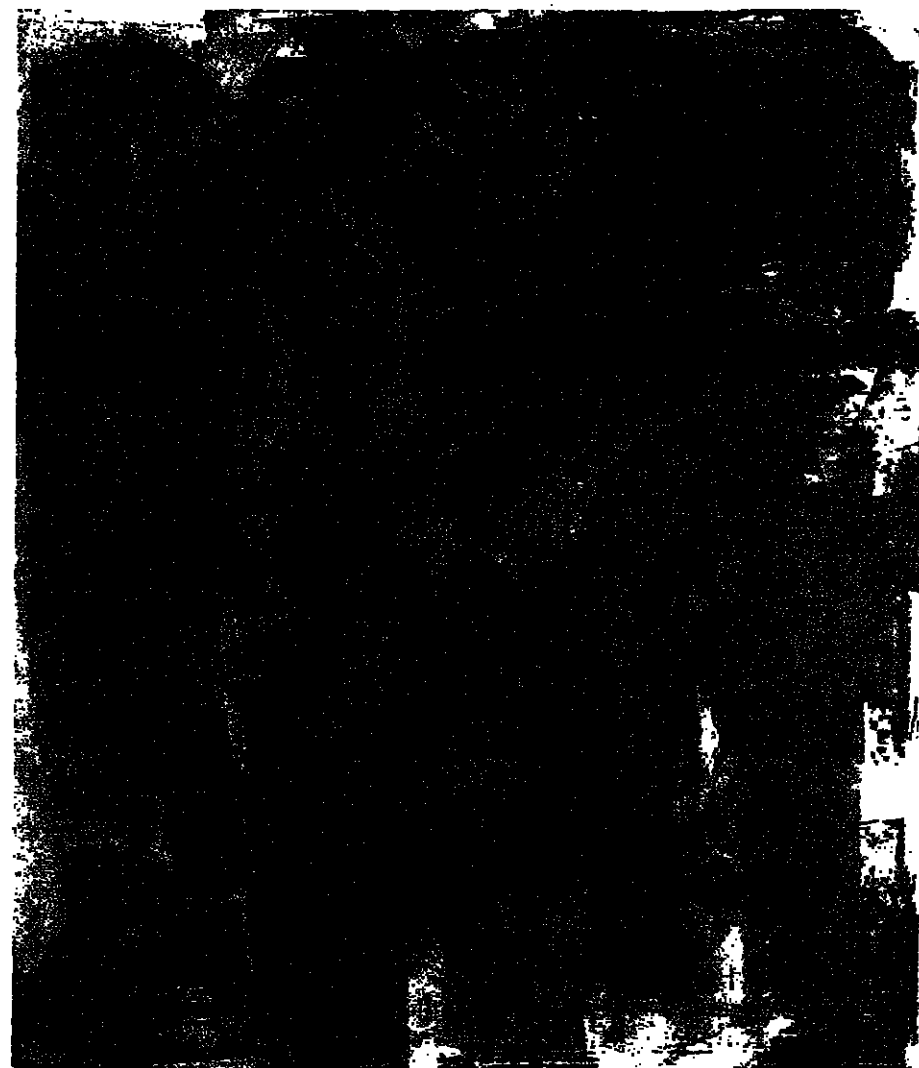
But there are reports from the art schools of a newly-awakened interest in painting — can this be true? Of course it can. The rumours of the death of painting are probably just as exaggerated as they always have been, just as similar rumours of the death of the novel usually are. Or

that history has come to an end, as some were claiming just a few years ago. Art keeps shedding its skin, perhaps a little more often and a little more rapidly than before, but a look at the artists in the display rooms show that creativity still thrives. It is a fact that there are more and more artists. The fine arts programmes at Swedish upper secondary schools are swamped by students, as are the media programmes. More young artists than ever before are graduating from art colleges. Both numbers and mobility are increasing. The future of art depends on how it will be able to handle its new conditions of existence.

The writer is curator at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm



'Prima Luce' by Ann Edholm (left), and 'Three' by Hakan Rehnberg (right), the two Swedish artists who will be exhibited in the main gallery at Darat Al Funun from today, opening at 7:00 p.m. with a lecture on Swedish art in relation to Europe. The exhibition will be followed by a joint Jordanian-Swedish exhibition at the Konsthallen in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September



## Summit preserves huge tract of forest

Five African heads of state have reached an agreement to preserve six million hectares — an area the size of Switzerland — in the world's second-largest rainforest. The agreement also includes a pledge not to displace the people who live in the protected areas and promises of money from donor nations.

By Mike Crawley

FOREST LAND the size of Switzerland is to be preserved under a new agreement reached by five African heads of state, a move that is being called a landmark in rainforest conservation.

The leaders of Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic and Congo-Brazzaville signed the deal during a summit in Yaounde. They agreed to protect six million hectares in the Congo basin, the world's second largest tropical rainforest.

The largest single protected tract in the deal is a 3.5 million hectare trans-border area in Gabon, Cameroon and Congo-Brazzaville.

The deal "signifies a crucial turning point in protection of forests in the Congo basin," says Jean Paul Jeanrenaud, head of the Forests for Life project of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

"For the first time, we're seeing really high-level political support being rallied toward saving these important forests."

WWF-U.K.'s honorary patron, Prince Philip, acted as chairman of the Yaounde summit.

At 247 million hectares, the Congo basin rainforest's size is second only to the Amazon. Until now, just 17.5 million hectares were preserved. The Yaounde declaration on March 17 brings the total under conservation to nearly 10 per cent.

Still, there is concern that this figure is inflated by "parks on paper" — areas in which the conservation laws are not enforced.

The statistics about the world's forests paint a bleak picture. In the 20th century alone, we have destroyed half the planet's original forest cover, which scientists believe is a contributing factor to global warming.

Every year, mainly to feed the seemingly insatiable demand of multinational logging companies and consumers in developed countries, 14 million hectares of tropical forests are chopped down, an area twice the size of Scotland. That number can take the wind from the sails of an announcement that six million hectares are being preserved.

Yet campaigners see a trend that indi-

cates the world may have turned a corner on destructive logging.

The amount of tropical forest cover chopped down was more than 17 million hectares a year in the late 1980s. The exact numbers are not in yet, but there is some speculation that the annual figure may now be as low as 11 million hectares. In other words, we are still destroying a lot of rainforest, but less than we used to.

Last year, Brazil made a highly publicised pledge to protect 25 million hectares of rain forest and in the wake of devastating flooding caused by erosion, China banned logging along river slopes.

Demand is also growing from Western consumers for wood products from sustainably managed forests. Less than one million hectares of timber land worldwide was certified as sustainably managed in 1992. It has since increased to 15 million hectares.

A global alliance that includes the WWF and the World Bank is seeking the creation of 50 million hectares of newly protected forest and the certification of 200 million hectares as sustainably managed by the year 2005.

The World Bank is also heavily involved in the Congo basin conservation deal, marking another step toward its own environmental rehabilitation. The bank is trying hard to shed its reputation for unsustainable development by actively supporting environmental projects.

Andrew Rogerson, the World Bank's representative in Britain, says donors are prepared to commit \$400 million in grants or low cost loans to the five African countries in exchange for the forestry management changes they pledged at Yaounde.

Although the final agreements are yet to be signed for two-thirds of that money, the pledge shows that Western organisations have begun to learn that they cannot simply lecture developing countries about their environmental sins, but must put their money where their mouths are. The WWF has itself committed \$500,000 to finance the management of the protected forests.

"The government themselves cannot do it alone. They have to be supported from outside," says Jeanrenaud. "If the resources aren't available it will be us (in developed countries) to blame."

The five African governments — some of which are among the world's poorest — do not want their gift to the earth to go unacknowledged by the rest of the globe. Forestry represents 10 per cent of their

*'...poor people don't cut down trees because they want to degrade the forest. They do it to survive'*

combined GDP, and although no one has put a figure on the potential income they are foregoing by choosing to preserve the forests rather than harvest them, it no doubt runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Our countries are offering part of our resources to the whole world in terms of protected areas," says Dr. Nguete Tolo, special forestry adviser to Cameroonian President Paul Biya. "We believe the world, through organisations that have an interest in conservation, should assist us."

Nguete says poverty is the No. 1 enemy of environmental conservation in this area. He tells the story of a man who lost his government job because of a structural adjustment programme, then resorted to poaching to provide for his family. He was making the point that poor people don't cut down trees because they want to degrade the forest. They do it to survive.

Cameroon has made forestry policy a priority, adopting a tropical forestry action plan and involving local people in planning decisions.

The people behind the Yaounde declaration say those who live and work in the protected forests will be able to continue to do so.

"People will not in any way be ejected or moved on from these areas," says Jeanrenaud. "There's no intention of actually depriving them of their livelihood. What one hopes the result will be is an enhancement of their livelihoods because they will be involved in the direct benefits of management."

In addition to preserving the forest, the Yaounde declaration also includes plans for improving the fate of the Western black rhino, of which only 25 are believed to remain.

— Gemini News

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# U.S. to push for Jordan's WTO membership before 2000

AMMAN (AFP) — The United States has pledged to back Jordan's efforts to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) before the end of the year, the U.S. ambassador to Jordan William Burns has said.

"One of the major goals... especially in the next few months, is to do as much as we can to support Jordan's goal to become a member of the World Trade Organisation by the year 2000," Burns added.

Burns said the drive follows the signing in Washington last week of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between Jordan and the U.S., and stressed the urgency of concluding Jordan's negotiations with the WTO.

"If Jordan is unable to win the membership of the WTO by the year 2000 the likelihood is that it is going to make the bar that much higher for Jordan to get over," he indicated.

The ambassador also stressed the need for Jordan to press ahead with updating legislation on intellectual property rights (IPRs) before it can join the organisation.

"There are a lot of companies that are interested in doing business that aren't going to do it unless they have that kind of security about protection of patents and copyrights," he said.

He cited the example of Beirut where the U.S. firm Microsoft announced it would open a regional office the day parliament endorsed a long-awaited IPR bill.

The TIFA agreement provides a framework for U.S.-Jordanian public and private sector dialogue on trade issues such as industrial standards and copyright protection to increase investment opportunities in Jordan.

Jordan is in the process of making its trademark and patent laws consistent with the WTO agreements on intellectual property rights.

Trade between the WTO's 134 member states accounts for more than 90 per cent of all international trade.

## ILO: Over 24m jobs lost in South Asia

GENEVA (AFP) — More than 24 million jobs have been lost in East Asia since financial turbulence began in the region, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has warned.

Most of the jobs had been lost in the modern, industrial and service sectors of the economies, where wages, productivity and working conditions tended to be higher than average, said the ILO.

These closures have forced large numbers of workers into crowded and low-paying sectors such as farm work and to eke out a living in the informal economy.

The ILO issued an update on job losses ahead of a two-day seminar on Asia's persistent unemployment crisis and ways to minimise the social fallout.

"Under current trends the upward spiral of unemployment growth appears to be slowing, but unemployment is still increasing from record high levels in most of the region's labour markets, with often disastrous consequences for workers and their families," the ILO said.

Unemployment rates between 1996 and 1998 have nearly doubled in Hong Kong, China and the Philippines, according to ILO data.

Indonesia's unemployment rate is currently estimated by the ILO at 15 to 20 per cent, up to five times as high as the rate in 1996, before the Asian troubles began.

In South Korea, an estimated 7.6 per cent of the workforce are out of work, compared to 2.6 per cent two years ago, while the Malaysian figure has almost tripled to around 6.7 per cent.

Thailand's jobless rate is estimated at eight per cent, against 1.1 per cent in 1996.

## \$600 to \$800b needed to solve water crises — World Bank

CAIRO (AFP) — Between \$600 and \$800 billion is needed over 10 years to solve water shortages threatening to trigger armed conflicts in the world, World Bank Vice President Ismail Serageldin said here Monday.

Experts, however, said raising huge amounts of funds would be difficult for poorer countries which suffer the most from water shortages combined with a population explosion.

The world's population is expected to climb from six billion people in 2000 to nine billion people in 2025, and as a result global water resources should increase by 20 per cent, the experts said.

The chief executive officer of the French water giant Suez-Lyonnais des Eaux, Jerome Monod, appealed for alternative and less costly solutions that are adapted to each country's need.

Former World Bank president Robert McNamara stressed that the water problem was first and foremost political.

"The basic problem of water is political. It is basically a national problem," he said, urging the experts to search for solutions on a national level.

Officials and experts from the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Water Council have been meeting here since Saturday.

They will elect a new water commission to highlight the urgency of the world's limited water supplies.

## Oil price rise seen not all good news for Arab Gulf oil states

DUBAI (AFP) — The rise in oil prices is not all good news for the Arab Gulf petromonarchies, experts said ahead of Tuesday's OPEC conference to ratify production cuts.

They said a sustained price recovery would revive projects in rival fields such as the Caspian, slow down an economic revival in Asia and could also prompt Gulf states to shelve economic reforms.

But "Gulf states want to turn to pressing matters. They need the money to finance development projects," said the adviser of a state oil company in the region, contacted from Dubai. "The only way to get that for now is to raise prices."

Saudi Arabia spearheaded a campaign which culminated on March 12 with an accord in The Hague between OPEC and non-member states to slash more than two million barrels a day off world output to reverse the collapse in oil prices.

Ahead of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting in Vienna on Tuesday, Arab Gulf oil ministers endorsed the accord at talks in Abu Dhabi, pledging to make half of the cuts.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali Ibn Ibrahim Al Nuaimi set the target at reaching a price of between \$18 and \$21 for a barrel of West Texas Intermediate, or the equivalent of almost \$16 a barrel for the basket of OPEC crudes.

That would be \$4 a barrel higher than the average price in 1998.

"The Saudis have turned back to the logic of price controls, after more than a year of following a policy of gaining market shares," said Najib Al Aadi, an adviser at the France-based Observatoire Meditteranee de l'Energie.

The collapse of prices, which even dipped below \$10 a barrel at the end of 1998, slashed the revenues of OPEC states by 35 per cent.

For the Saudi kingdom, the world's top producer and exporter, the collapse was to blame for negative growth of 10.8 per cent and a deficit of \$12.2 billion.

Despite the short-term economic costs, Gulf states would have been able to take advantage of low prices to nibble away at market shares at the expense of more costly oilfields in the Caspian Sea, Venezuela and North Sea.

"The price fall put into question the profitability of Caspian projects. But a recovery will give them a new lease of life," said Ali Aadi, noting Caspian production costs are \$7-\$8 a barrel compared to \$1-\$2 in the Gulf.

Ali Aadi also pointed to the impact of price rises on the energy-hungry Asian economies.

"The more prices rise, the more it will slow down the recovery of Asian economies, thus delaying increased demand and real improvement on the (oil) market," he said.

Also, the upside of low prices was that Gulf states embarked last year on reforms such as privatisation, a policy which they would be tempted to abandon because of "the high cost in social terms," Ali Aadi said.

In Gulf banking circles, the mounting pressure on the treasury in Riyadh because of low prices could explain the turnaround in Saudi oil policy in favour of short-term benefits.

A wave of speculation on the Saudi riyal since last year was fuelled by rumours of a possible devaluation, flatly denied by Riyadh.

One Gulf banker said the kingdom had opted for higher prices rather than launch unpopular fiscal reforms that would hit the pockets of their nationals.

Exchange Rates Monday, 22-03-99									
ACCESS 4545664									
CURRENCY	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1688	0.1927	1.6780	1.8387	0.1945	2.3263	0.2077	0.7082
SAUDI RIYAL	2.2973	1.0000	1.0205	9.9483	9.7403	1.0301	12.3229	1.0781	3.7505
U.A.E. DIRHAM	5.1853	0.5786	1.0000	9.7454	8.5416	1.0091	12.0716	1.0442	3.6740
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	0.1025	0.1025	1.0000	0.9791	0.1035	1.2287	0.1108	0.3770
OMAN RIYAL	0.5439	0.1027	0.1048	1.0214	1.0000	0.1058	1.2652	0.1130	0.3851
QATAR RIYAL	5.1427	0.8708	0.8910	8.8578	9.4559	1.0000	11.9632	1.0684	3.6410
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4289	0.0811	0.0828	0.8073	0.7904	0.0836	1.0000	0.0893	0.3044
EGYPT POUND	4.8138	0.9087	0.9278	9.0388	8.8508	0.9280	11.975	1.0000	2.4280
LIBANON LIRA	21.2268	4.0075	4.0009	38.8674	39.0339	4.1280	49.3539	4.4102	15.0300
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2888	0.2722	2.8525	2.8971	0.2746	3.2857	0.2834	1.0000
GERMAN MARK	0.8882	0.1633	0.1673	1.6304	1.5963	0.1688	2.0196	0.1804	0.6147
FRANCE FRANC	2.5378	0.4791	0.4894	4.7850	4.6884	0.4835	5.9037	0.5272	1.7938
SWITZERLAND FR.	2.0725	0.3913	0.3984	3.8923	3.8109	0.4030	4.8214	0.4336	1.4674
NETHERLAND GULDER	8.5110	1.6067	1.6401	15.9836	15.6484	1.6550	19.7989	1.7681	6.0258
JAPAN YEN	1.6576	0.3129	0.3184	3.1130	3.0479	0.3223	3.8561	0.3444	1.1736
HOLLAND GULDER	2.8593	0.5388	0.5510	5.3888	5.2575	0.5580	6.8516	0.5940	2.0244
SWEDEN KRONA	11.5987	2.1895	2.2251	21.7822	21.3298	2.2554	28.5818	2.4036	8.2119
ITALY LIRA	25.1239	4.7428	4.8410	47.1822	46.1958	4.8854	59.4449	5.2194	17.7877
BELGIUM FRANC	52.3432	9.8811	10.0868	98.2597	96.2446	10.1782	121.7644	10.874	37.0590
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2355	0.4226	0.4318	4.2357	4.1173	0.4385	5.2096	0.4652	1.5855
GREEK DRACHMA	4.1135	0.7879	0.8043	7.8385	7.6746	0.8116	9.7035	0.8571	2.9551
CYPRUS POUND	0.7516	0.1419	0.1448	1.4114	1.3819	0.1461	1.7483	0.1561	0.5321
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.8537	3.3703	3.4405	33.5289	32.8279	3.4717	41.5324	3.7030	12.5454
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1384	0.4037	0.4121	4.0159	3.9320	0.4168	4.9745	0.4442	1.5142
EURO	1.2972	0.2449	0.2500	2.4382	2.3853	0.2523	3.0177	0.2635	0.9184

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR									
CURRENCY	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT	PRICE	UNIT
US DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1688	0.5595	0.5815	0.1859	0.8521	0.4940	5.5219	1.0888
GERMAN MARK	0.8147	1.0000	0.3421	0.4189	0.1020	0.5337	0.3036	3.4558	0.6692
FRANCE FRANC	1.7968	2.8232	1.0000	1.2245	0.2882	1.5310	0.8876	10.1014	1.9564
SWITZERLAND FR.	1.4874	2.3873	0.8167	1.0000	0.2435	1.2503	0.7249	8.2495	1.5977
NETHERLAND GULDER	8.0258	9.8034	3.3338	4.1064	1.0000	5.1345	2.9768	33.8762	6.5820
JAPAN YEN	117.3800	190.9380	85.3161	79.8782	19.4763	1.0000	57.9727	659.7818	127.7818
HOLLAND GULDER	2.0244	3.2355	1.7267	1.3796	0.3360	1.7249	1.0000	11.3829	2.3042
SWEDEN KRONA	8.2119	9.3589	4.3703	5.5882	1.3623	6.9972	4.0565	46.1662	8.8411
ITALY LIRA	17.7877	28.3288	8.5897	12.1219	2.9519	15.1565	8.7867	1.0000	19.3672
BELGIUM FRANC	37.0590	60.2813	20.8250	25.2549	6.1501	31.5772	18.3052	208.3406	40.3498
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.5855	2.6795	0.8824	1.0805	0.2831	1.3510	0.7832	8.9137	1.7263
CYPRUS POUND	2.9551	4.8077	1.9448	2.0138	0.4304	2.3180	1.4297	16.8132	3.2178
GREEK DRACHMA	0.5321	0.8857	0.2991	0.3625	0.0863	0.4534	0.2628	2.9914	0.5794
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	12.5454	20.5947	7.0850	8.8141	2.0877	10.7708	6.3440	71.0626	13.7629
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5142	2.4831	0.8438	1.0318	0.2513	1.2900	0.7479	8.5115	1.6884
EURO	0.9184	1.4842	0.5112	0.6229	0.1524	0.7628	0.4537	5.1834	1.0000

## Emirates in major awards sweep at ITB Berlin

EMIRATES HAS one again topped the polls to emerge Best Airline of the Year and Best Airline to the Middle East, in two major European passenger surveys. The Best Airline of the Year award was the result of a readership poll by Germany's consumer travel magazine, Globo, while the second award was by TTG Europe, the flagship travel trade publication. Results were announced during the annual ITB Berlin - one of the world's largest travel fairs.

Sheikh Ahmad Ben Al Maktoum, Emirates' Chairman, said: "We are delighted to have been voted for these two prestigious awards which indicate the high level of confidence that our passengers and associates have in Emirates."

The Globo survey polled Emirates together with 25 major carriers, with returns from 12,500 readers across Germany. Emirates tipped the scales with the highest ever score achieved by any airline in magazine's annual Golden Globe Travel Awards. Readers surveyed airlines for aspects such as inflight catering, service, entertainment, friendliness of staff. This is the third time that Emirates has won the Best Airline title from Globo, after its last two victories in 1994 and 1997.

The Best Airline award comes a month after Emirates won Airline of the Year in U.K.'s OAG Travel Awards.

Ghaith Al Ghaith, Emirates' commercial operations director, received the Best Airline trophy from Globo's editor-in-chief, Peter Kandler, during a gala dinner held in celebration of the magazine's 10th anniversary.

TTG Europe's poll was conducted among 19,000 IATA travel agents in Europe and marks the seventh successive year that Emirates has won in the category of Best Airline to the Middle East. Sheikh Ahmad received the award from Stuart Baker, TTG Europe's publishing director.

Emirates is participating in the ITB Berlin for its 10th successive year. The Dubai-based carrier is the winner of three Airline of the Year titles 1999, 1998 and 1994 and nine Best Airline awards, with a medal tally numbering over 166 international titles.

**THE Daily Crossword** Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

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By Vivian O. Collins  
Albany, GA

STASH ESSES APE  
LENTU ANILE VOW  
ATTIG RAPIDFIRE  
CROG INKS ELVES  
KANKAKEE ORA  
IBERIAN SNOB  
BLANG NIL HIDE  
LINT APPLY ICON  
OATH BAH INERT  
BATE ELEGANT  
MAG GUMSHOES  
AMOUR DRIP ERNE  
GAUDINIAS EPODE  
ENIC NORSE MINOR  
SEA TREISS SNOWS

46 Only even  
prime number  
47 Achilles' victim  
in 'The Iliad'  
48 Norse sea  
monster  
50 Indecent  
gears  
52 French floor  
53 Sequence of  
eight  
54 Lean-to  
55 Barbed spear  
56 Blue-green  
57 French pronoun  
58 Assam and  
Caribbean  
59 Tiny portion

**Peanuts**

JOE HOODINI!

**Andy Capp**

SHE'S GIVING ME THE SHIVERS  
WHO IS?

THAT WOMAN IN THE CORNER WITH THOSE AWFUL STARING EYES

RELAX, IT'S JUST MY MUM-IN-LAW- AFFRAID TO BLINK IN CASE SHE MIGHT MISS SOMETHING

**Mutt'n' Jeff**

WELL, HOW DID YOU DO AT SCHOOL TODAY?

OH, GREAT, POP!

TEACHER SAID I WAS A REGULAR LITTLE BEAVER!

WELL, THAT MEANS YOU'RE A HARD WORKER!

NO, SIR! THAT MEANS I GOTTA STOP CHEWING MY PENCILS!

**THE BETTER HALF.** By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"I never told my husband I changed my hair from blond to black. I'm still waiting for him to notice."

**JUMBLE**

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ECTAN  
PHRAC  
ARUSSE  
HERFIE

Answer: THEIR

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argillon

He's mine! Leggo, I saw him first!

SOUGHT BY COMPETING TAXI DRIVERS.

Now arrange the jumbled letters to form the four words suggested by the above cartoon.

Yesterday's Jumbles: ALIAS AHEAD  
Answer: Shared by a baby politician and a cc. antedote - BAD GILLS







## Lewis and Holyfield to fight again in September or October

LONDON (AFP) — Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield will fight again for boxing's heavyweight crown in September or October, Lewis' manager Frank Maloney confirmed on Sunday.

Holyfield has added his agreement to Lewis' for the re-match, designed to unify the heavyweight division after last week's New York fight between the two was controversially judged a draw.

British fighter Lewis was thought by most neutral observers to have won the first fight at Madison Square Garden.

Promoter Don King, who also promoted the first fight, on Sunday confirmed Holyfield's agreement for a fight which is almost certain to take place in the United States, possibly at the 65,000-capacity Yankee Stadium in New York.

The re-match is set to earn

Lewis and Holyfield up to \$20 million each in an even split of the purse.

Lewis, the WBC champion, had already put his name to paper for a re-match under the contractual terms of the first WBC-WBA-IBF bout last week.

Maloney said: "There is no venue yet, it will be parity purse money."

"I think the re-match will break every record in boxing history. The result was a travesty but in another way it's made everybody in the world aware of boxing."

"It's so good to get it on. Lennox is the uncrowned, undisputed champion but this time he will put it beyond doubt and walk away with the belts. This time Lennox will probably step into the ring as favourite."

"Boxing needs this fight, there was no other way for Lewis or Holyfield to go. They had to have this fight

to put the record straight.

"Holyfield being the man and the warrior he is, there is no way he could have walked away from it. If he did he would have to have walked away from boxing."

Maloney said there was an outside chance of the bout being staged in Britain, but the United States was the most likely venue.

Lewis said: "Why can't the re-match happen tomorrow? I'm looking forward to doing it this time. I will be lifted even more by the whole country being behind me, the support has kept me going."

King is keen on a venue which could at least double the 'live' gate receipts of the first fight. Madison Square Garden would be doubly keen to be associated with the promotion after the furore of last week's clash, which has caused an investigation in America.

Home Box Office, the

American cable network, have a contract with Lewis. They beamed the first fight across the U.S., producing income in excess of \$50 million and are set to repeat the transmission of a fight the whole world wants to see.

For the original fight, Holyfield was guaranteed \$20 million against \$10 million for Lewis, but the re-match contract stipulated \$0-50.

Lewis looked to have done enough to become undisputed champion, but scores of 115-113 for Holyfield from New Jersey judge Eugenia Williams and 115-115 from Britain's Larry O'Connell enabled Holyfield to go home with his WBA and IBF crowns intact.

The fight judging is the subject of an investigation.

## Barca, Bayern, Bordeaux and Lazio crank up title charge

PARIS (AFP) — The booming B's were at it again at the weekend as Barcelona, Bayern Munich and Bordeaux bolstered their respective title challenges with another three points — even if style was not their watchword.

Although Bayern were a little less imperious than usual, their last-gasp 1-0 win over Werder Bremen in a German Cup final dress rehearsal was no less satisfying for that as it maintained a huge 14-point lead over reigning champions Kaiserslautern, 2-1 winners at Bochum.

Carsten Jancker was Bayern's hero, netting four minutes from time while at the other end, teammate Oliver Kahn celebrated becoming the first goalkeeper in Bundesliga history to keep eight successive clean sheets in the league.

If Bayern, still on course for a treble of league, cup and European Cup, laboured hard for their win, so too did Bordeaux, who unlike the Bavarians had to bounce back from a midweek European defeat — a 6-0 UEFA Cup humiliation in Parma.

Their 1-0 success over Strasbourg showed that Elie Baup's men are not about to lie down and let favourites Marseille — seen as the more thoroughbred outfit — overhaul them in the French league's final furlong.

Bordeaux skipper Michel Pavon headed the all-important goal.

Marseille hammered Lorient 4-1 with Fabrizio Ravaneli twice hitting the target — but the former European champions remain a tantalising one point adrift with just seven games remaining.

Lyon stay third and on course for a shot at the Champions League despite a 1-0 loss at struggling Le Havre.

Paris St Germain gave themselves a huge boost, winning their first match under new coach Philippe Bergeroo 1-0 at Auxerre to climb into the top half of the table.

In Spain, Barcelona's future remains as orange as ever after they thanked their sizeable Dutch connection for conjuring another three points, two goals from Phillip Cocu bringing a 2-0 win at Real Sociedad for Louis Van Gaal's side.

Cocu struck after 29 and 86 minutes to hand Sociedad only their second home defeat of the season at the Anoeta stadium.

Barca now have 53 points from 27 matches, five more than Celta Vigo, who moved into second place after hammering Racing Santander 3-0 with goals from Brazilian midfielder Mazinho, Juan Sanchez and Alexander Mostovoi.

Sociedad played out the final 13 minutes against Barcelona with ten men after Fuentas was ordered off for a foul on Cocu's strike partner Patrick Kluijver, two of half a dozen Dutchmen in a formation shorn of the services of Luis Figo and Luis Enrique.

Sociedad had started



Cagliari's Patrick Mboma of Cameroon jubilates after scoring one of his three goals during the Serie A soccer match against Empoli in Cagliari. Cagliari beat Empoli 5-1 (AFP photo)



Real Mallorca's Ariel Lopez (C) shoots past Deportivo La Coruna's Songo (L) of Cameroon as Deportivo La Coruna's Schuerr (R) looks on in a Liga match in Palma de Mallorca. Deportivo La Coruna won 2-1 (AFP photo)

brightly and might have gone ahead but De Pedro's fourth-minute effort came back of the post with keeper Ruud Hesp beaten.

Valencia slipped below Vigo to third after they dropped two points in a 1-1 home draw with Real Zaragoza on Sunday evening. Gustavo Lopez scored on 18 minutes to put the visitors in front but Romanian international Adrian Ilie equalised shortly after half-time to save a point.

Real Madrid, keen to get back into the title race after their European Cup exit in Kiev, saw off lowly Extremadura 2-0 at the Bernabeu Stadium with goals from Raul, set up by Davor Suker on the half hour, and Juan Francisco Juanito own goal shortly after the break.

But Real remain seven points off the pace.

Elsewhere, in a battle of UEFA Cup hopefuls, Mallorca — fourth at start of play — went down 2-1 at home to Deportivo La Coruna, allowing the visitors to move ahead of them.

In Italy, Lazio and Fiorentina lead the way in what looks like a two-horse

for the Serie A title.

The weekend was marked by the resignation of luckless Inter Milan coach Mircea Lucescu after his team were thrashed 4-0 by Sampdoria, the latest humiliation in a 10-match winless streak. Vincenzo Montella notched a hat-trick.

Lazio cruised to an easy 2-0 victory over Venezia, the goals from Portugal's Sergio Conceicao and Yugoslav Sinisa Mihajlovic extending their unbeaten run to 13 wins and three draws since mid-November.

Fiorentina also won, albeit thanks to a 90th minute strike from Carmine Esposito to finalise a 2-1 win against Piacenza after an earlier strike from top league marksman Gabriel Batistuta.

But AC Milan and Parma both lost ground, Milan held 2-2 at home by Bari, while Parma went down 2-1 in Udinese as Brazilian Marcio Amoroso netted a brilliant individual effort in the final minute.

A hat-trick from Cameroon striker Patrick Mboma, meanwhile, guided Cagliari to a 5-1 victory over Empoli. There were shocks in the Dutch league as leaders

Feyenoord slumped 4-1 at Willem II Tilburg, who have found a rich vein of form over the past two months to move into the top four.

But Feyenoord's second defeat of the season still left them eight points clear of nearest rivals Vitesse Arnhem, who triumphed 1-0 at Ajax with an early Nikos Machlas goal.

Feyenoord now have 58 points from their 24 matches, while Arnhem have 50 having played a game more.

Ajax's first home reverse pushed them down from third to fifth behind PSV Eindhoven, who completed a miserable weekend for Rotterdam by crushing Feyenoord's city neighbours Sparta 5-0 away from home.

In Portugal, Porto won 3-1 at Salgueiros to stay three points clear of neighbours Boavista, who could only draw at home to Vitoria Setubal.

Graeme Souness' Benfica are six points adrift following a disappointing 1-1 stalemate at Uniao Leiria.

Benfica's city rivals Sporting Lisbon are fourth after they ran out 3-1 winners at Maritimo Funchal on Madeira.

## Moya through on bad day for Australians

KEY BISCAINE (AFP) — Newly minted No. 1 Carlos Moya squeaked past Jason Stoltenberg at the Lipton Championships Sunday, contributing to an exodus of Australians that also included fifth-seeded Pat Rafter and Mark Philippoussis.

Moya, just 37 points in front of Pete Sampras at the top of the rankings, was pushed to the limit by Stoltenberg, who had saved two match points in the previous round against Zimbabwe's Wayne Black.

Moya took two hours and 20 minutes to subdue the 36th-ranked player in the world 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 7-5.

"I think I played a good match today," Moya said. "The conditions were not easy for me. I played early in the morning, which I don't like. It was pretty windy. Stoltenberg played great. I've been a little bit lucky, but I have to be very happy with that match."

The second-seeded Sampras recorded a 7-5, 6-3 victory over No. 31 Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden. Sampras, winner here in 1993 and 1994, still is seeking his first title of 1999 in his fourth event of the year. He must win his fourth-round match to have a chance of regaining the world No. 1 spot.

Rafter's chances of reaching the top spot dissolved with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 defeat at the hands of German Nicolas Kiefer.

The two-time defending U.S. Open champion also missed out on a chance at the No. 1 ranking last week when he fell to Kiefer in the second round at Indian Wells.

Philippoussis, who beat Moya for the Championships Cup title in Indian Wells, California, last week after Rafter's early exit, was ousted by Russian teenager Marat Safin.

Safin dominated both tiebreaks in a 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/3) triumph.

Sixth-seeded Briton Tim Henman was victimised again by France's Jerome Golmard.

Golmard, who beat Henman in the quarter-finals at Dubai in February, rallied from a 5-3 deficit in the second set, and saved a



Defending champion Marcelo Rios of Chile returns a shot to Byron Black of Zimbabwe during their third round match at The Lipton Championships at Key Biscayne (AFP photo)



Nicolas Kiefer of Germany eyes the ball as he returns a backhand to Patrick Rafter of Australia in the third round of The Lipton Championships tennis tournament. Kiefer won 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 (AFP photo)

set point in the tiebreaker to finish off Henman in two: 6-4, 7-6 (9/7).

Greg Rusedski kept Britain in the hunt, breezing through a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Hendrik Dreekman.

Rusedski survived a break point on his final service game to complete a straight-forward victory over the 24-year-old German, ranked 102 in the world.

Fourth seeded Alex Corretja of Spain had to struggle to get past Paraguay's Ramon Delgado 6-4, 1-6, 6-4.

Seventh and eighth seeds Richard Krajicek and Marcelo Rios made it safely through to the round of 16.

Krajicek beat compatriot Jan Siemerink and Rios beat Zimbabwe's Byron Black.

Women's action was highlighted by the night match between second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport and Italy's Silvia Farina.

In day matches, France's Australian Open finalist Amelie Mauresmo was stunned by Russian Elena Likhovseva 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-1.

World No. 1 and top seed Martina Hingis advanced with ease, as did second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport, third-seeded American Monica Seles and seventh seed Steffi Graf of Germany.

Graf has been one of the most successful players at the Lipton, winning five titles and compiling a 57-5 record. She hasn't lost a match here since the 1993 final.

"It's been going extremely well," said Graf. "The way I was going out there, I've been really going for my shots, serving extremely well, returning well. It seems whatever I'm trying out there, it really is going in the right direction."

Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre						
<b>CINEMA TEL:463-4144</b> <b>PHILADELPHIA '1'</b> Tom Hanks & Edward Burns ...in <b>SAVING PRIVATE RYAN</b> Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15	<b>CINEMA TEL:463-4144</b> <b>PHILADELPHIA '2'</b> Robert De Niro... in <b>RONIN</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<b>CINEMA TEL:5699238</b> <b>PLAZA</b> Ahmad Zaki & Layla Eloui ... in <b>EDHAK EL SOURA TITLA' HILWEH</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<b>CINEMA TEL:5677420</b> <b>CONCORDE</b> Adel Imam ...in <b>ALWAD MAHROUS</b> <b>BT' AL WAZIR</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30 <b>CONCORDE 2</b> Patrick Swayze ...in <b>BLACK DOG</b>	<b>CINEMA TEL:5934793</b> <b>GALLERIA 1</b> ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria <b>DANCE WITH ME</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	<b>CINEMA TEL:5934793</b> <b>GALLERIA 2</b> ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Michael Douglas ...in <b>A PERFECT MURDER</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	<b>Hisham Yanes Theatre</b> <b>TEL: 4625155</b> Starting on the Eid... the political satire <b>AL SALAM AL</b> Starting at 8:30 p.m.

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.





## LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



### Prince Ali urges more support for soccer team players

AMMAN — HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association (JFA), has given directives to release national team players from their working commitments to enable them to devote more time for training and preparation for the Aug. 15-31 Pan-Arab Games — Al Hussein Tournament. Earlier, Prince Ali met with working and retired referees as well as the president of clubs and discuss their needs and concerns, after he formed a new committee in charge of managing the JFA.

### Najjar runner up in table tennis

AMMAN — Jordan's Tetyana Najjar came runner-up while Alia Tuffaha finished seventh in the women's singles at the Arab Tennis-Table Federation's Championship which concluded in Beirut on Sunday. Najjar lost 3-0 to 21-year-old Besant Othman of Tunisia 21-16, 10-21, 14-21. Earlier, Najjar and Tuffaha won the gold medal in the women's double. They dedicated their win to the memory of His Majesty King Hussein who passed away on Feb. 7. Jordan's Iyad Maknani and Mustafa Rida took the 10th and 11th places respectively.

### Bodybuilding team to be finalised today

AMMAN — The finals of the Kingdom's Bodybuilding Championship will be held on Tuesday following which winners will be selected for the national team. President of the building Federation Abdul Men'ou Abu Touq said international champion Mustafa Hasanin will keep his position in the team, adding that national team players will get JD180 monthly from the Jordan Olympic Committee in support of their training and other expenses. According to Abu Touq winners in the national championship will take part in the Middle East Championship and the Mediterranean Tournament in Portugal May 12-17.

### Russian coach to train boxers

AMMAN — The Jordan Boxing Federation has contracted a Russian coach to train the national team as part of preparations for the Pan-Arab Games. The Russian coach represented his country in the 1972 Munich Olympics, trained several Russian teams and helped the Iraqi team win the 1987 championship.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

## FIFA's Blatter taking legal action

ZURICH (AFP) — FIFA boss Sepp Blatter is taking legal action against the author of a new British book, which claims his election as president last summer was rigged, FIFA announced here on Monday.

The allegations appear in "How they stole the game" by English author David Yallop, which Blatter is taking legal action to stop being published. He has already had the book banned in Switzerland.

The book has already been published in Germany and the Netherlands and is due to appear shortly in Britain.

Extracts of the book were printed in The Observer newspaper on Sunday. The book claims that twenty members of FIFA allegedly accepted a million dollars in bribes to fix the election of Blatter.

They each received \$50,000 from the ruler of a Middle Eastern state — who had the money flown in by private jet — to back Blatter for football's top job, the book alleges.

Based on the German translation, Blatter, who is a Swiss resident, filed a personal complaint on October 26 before the Meilen Tribunal, in Zurich, stating he was libelled 16 times in the book.

The FIFA boss fought a bitter election battle with UEFA President Lennart Johansson of Sweden to take over from the retiring Joao Havelange as head of world football last summer.

The FIFA statement added that the action being taken by Blatter was personal and not on behalf of the organisation.

## Orthodoxi prepares to host West Asia Basketball Championship

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Five out of seven teams have confirmed their participation in the 2nd West Asia Basketball Championship organised by Al Orthodoxi Club between April 12-17, club spokesman Fadi Zureikat said late Sunday.

Following a meeting of the West Asia Zone Federation Zureikat told a press conference that talks were under way with Lebanon's Al Hikma Club to participate in the six-day tournament.

Al Hikma, Arab champions for the last two years, have two professional players from Nigeria and Senegal, and are expected to be the tournament's powerhouse being Lebanon's top team and the champion of 1st West Asia Zone Championship last year.

Syrian champions Al Wihda — Al Orthodoxi's arch rival — are expected to confirm participation within the coming few days, added Zureikat.

The other teams taking part are the Iraq's Air Force Club, the Palestinian National Authority national team, Baykan from Iran, Yemen's Al Mina and Jordanian champions Al Orthodoxi Club.

According to observers, Al Orthodoxi Club and Al Hikma are the favourite teams to reach the final match.

"Al Hikma and Al Orthodoxi will be fighting for first place. However, the hosts do not stand a chance against Al Hikma which is expected to recruit NBA player, Rony Seikali, who used to play with the Miami Heat," said a former basketball coach who requested anonymity.

The winning team will qualify to play in the Asian Clubs Championship which is slated to start on May 22 in Beirut, said Hagop Khacherian, secretary general of Asian Basketball Confederation's (ABC) West Asia Zone.

According to Khacherian, the champion of Asia, will participate, for the first time, in the McDonalds Championship held in Italy later this year.

"Ten days ago the ABC reached an understanding with the International Basketball Federation — FIBA — to allow the Asian champion to take part in the annual event biennially," Khacherian told the Jordan Times.

The McDonalds Championship is considered one of the most important tournaments because the world's top teams usually compete including the NBA champion, two teams from Europe, one team from South America and the best team from Oceania.

The 2nd West Asia Basketball Championship, sponsored by Fine

company, is expected to attract scores of Jordanians who might have a hard time securing a place at Al Orthodoxi Club hall which can accommodate up to 1,500 people.

"The club will use a big projector to air the matches to people who will not be able to find tickets," said Zureikat.

According to Zureikat, Al Orthodoxi's team will be represented by the club's players. An earlier idea of enabling national team players to join the Al Orthodoxi's lineup as part of preparations for this summer's Pan-Arab Games was not yet finalised yet.

Officials declined to mention how that set-up would be arranged.

The event will be aired live on Jordan Television while the private-run Lebanese satellite station LBC took the broadcasting rights of the tournament.

The West Asia Championship was initiated with the formation of ABC's West Asia Zone last year and two championships have been held so far. The women's tournament and the 1st West Asia Championship in which five teams took part.

Al Hikma won the title playing against Al Mina, Al Wihda, Iran's Zobohan and Jordan's former champions Al Jazireh.

## Magic, Jazz, Sonics lose as Raptors upset Knicks

ORLANDO (R) — The Los Angeles Lakers played the first half like they were on a leave of absence such as the one Dennis Rodman just returned from, but they came to life in the second half to surprise the Magic.

Kobe Bryant scored 33 of his career-high 38 points after intermission as the Lakers rallied from a 20-point halftime deficit Sunday to stun the Orlando Magic 115-104.

"It's something I worked on all summer — hitting the open shots," Bryant said. "I have been noticing teams giving me the open shot lately. I hope they keep thinking like that." Bryant put on an awesome display in the second half, shooting 13-of-16 from the field. He made seven straight shots at one point in the third quarter, bringing back the Lakers (18-9) from a 63-43 halftime deficit. The Magic was outscored 41-20 in the fourth quarter.

"Kobe could have shot the ball from over the half-court area today," Magic forward Horace Grant said. "He was in the zone, so to speak. Guys had their hands up on him. He's just that talented to make shots." Shaquille O'Neal, once the cornerstone of the Orlando franchise, added 31 points and won for the first time at the Orlando arena as a member of the Lakers.

Booed every time he touched the ball, O'Neal got the last laugh by going 14-of-19 from the field with 13 rebounds.

After missing four games for unspecified personal reasons, Rodman made his first appearance with 3-13 remaining in the first quarter. He had only four points and six rebounds and picked up a technical in the fourth quarter for throwing an elbow but the Lakers improved to 10-0

with him in the lineup. Rookie Michael Doleac scored a career-high 25 points for the Magic but managed just one point in the second half.

"This is a very tough loss," said Orlando coach Chuck Daly, whose team dipped to 18-8. "To be up 20 at half-time and dissipate it is phenomenal on your home court." In Portland, Rasheed Wallace scored 26 points as the Trail Blazers used a 14-0 fourth-quarter run to become the first team to reach 20 wins with a 91-75 win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

The Pacific Division-leading Trail Blazers improved to an NBA-best 20-5.

At Detroit, Jerry Stackhouse drilled a 3-pointer at the overtime buzzer to give the Detroit Pistons a remarkable 104-101 victory over the Utah Jazz.

The basket gave Stackhouse a season-high 32 points. All but four came after halftime and 13 came in the fourth quarter, when the Pistons (14-11) erased a 16-point deficit against the disciplined Jazz (19-6).

In Toronto, rookie Vince Carter helped the Raptors extend the longest winning streak in franchise history by helping them beat the New York Knicks for the first time ever at home since entering the NBA in 1995.

Carter collected 23 points and 12 rebounds and had four clutch free throws in overtime, leading the Raptors to an 85-81 win over the Knicks, their fifth straight victory.

In Boston, Mark Bryant scored the first four points of a 6-0 run midway through overtime and Brent Barry made four crucial free throws in the final six seconds as the Chicago Bulls held off the Boston Celtics, 95-92.

Barry and Toni Kukoc led

Chicago with 20 points and Bryant added 18 for the Bulls.

In Cleveland, Wesley Person scored 22 points and Shawn Kemp made a pair key defensive plays down the stretch as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the woeful New Jersey Nets 88-85.

Stephon Marbury's 3-point attempt to tie it for New Jersey (4-20) as the clock wound down bounced off the rim twice before falling to the floor.

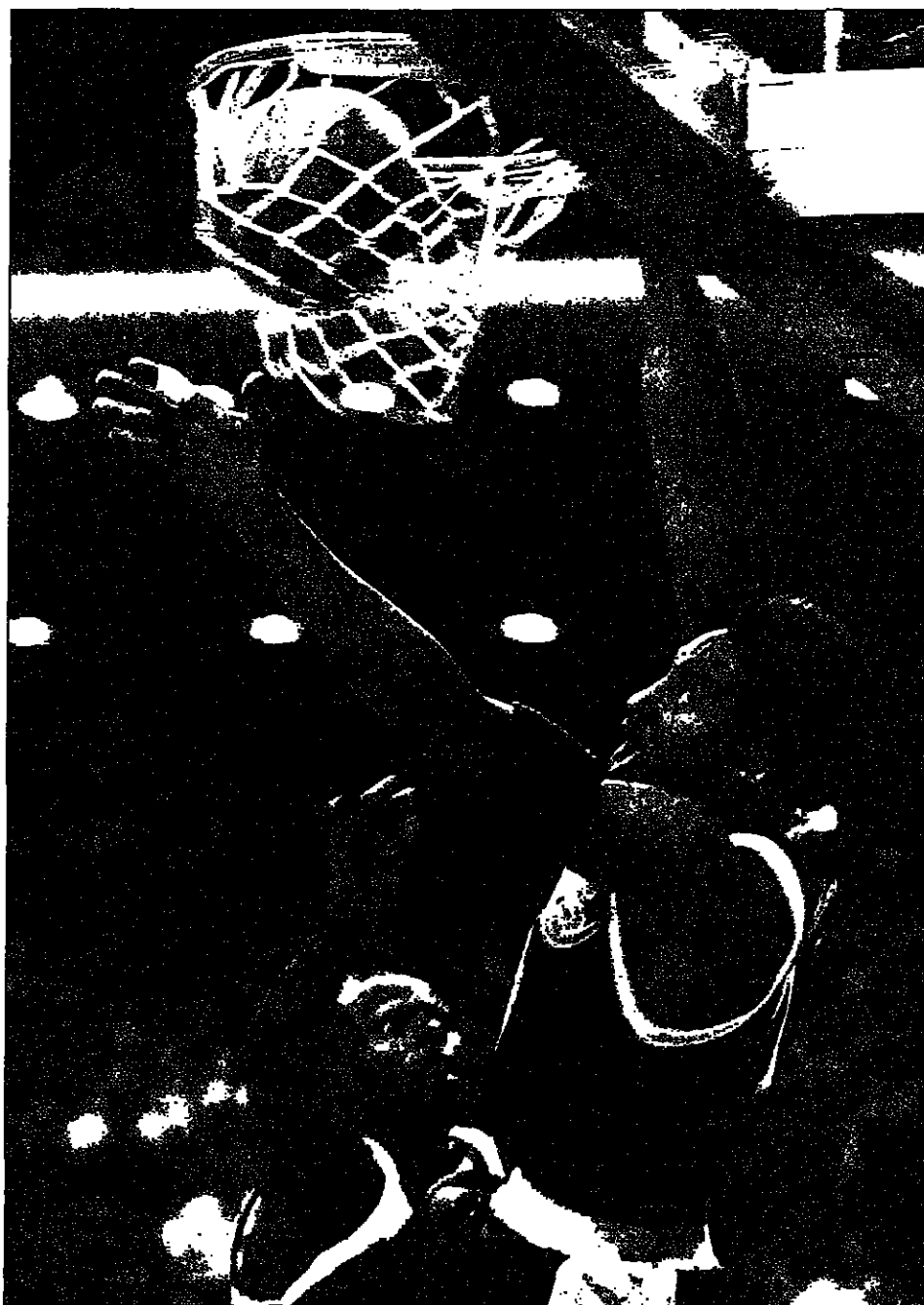
In Denver, the Denver Nuggets blew all but one point of a 29-point lead but held off the Seattle Supersonics 102-98.

Antonio McDyess went 7-of-10 from the foul line and scored nine of his 23 points in the fourth quarter to stave off the Sonics.

At Minnesota, the Los Angeles Clippers snapped a 20-game road losing streak and won for just the second time this season as Darrick Martin scored 22 points in a 100-85 victory over the slumping Minnesota Timberwolves.

In Milwaukee, Sam Cassell made his debut in a Milwaukee Bucks uniform and took just one game to re-injure his ankle.

Playing his first game since being acquired from the Nets in a huge three-way trade March 11, Cassell turned his right ankle in Milwaukee's 94-87 loss to the Charlotte Hornets.



Los Angeles Lakers guard (R) Kobe Bryant slam dunks the ball past Orlando Magic guard Darrell Armstrong (L) at the Arena in Orlando, FL. Bryant had a career high of 38 points to lead the Lakers to a 115-104 win (AFP photo)

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Zidane in wax museum

PARIS (AFP) — Two members of France's 1998 World Cup-winning team — midfielder Zinedine Zidane and goalkeeper Fabien Barthez — were Monday inaugurated into the Musee Grevin, France's leading waxworks museum. Barthez, however, did not show quite the same timing as he did in completing a shutout during France's 3-0 final win over Brazil. He arrived 30 minutes late for the unveiling ceremony of the lifelike replicas of himself and Zidane. Le Musee Grevin was created in 1882 by journalist Arthur Meyer to pay tribute to achievers in various fields.

### Armenian coach promises tough time for Russia and France

YEREVAN (AFP) — Armenian national team coach Suren Barsegian expects his team to provide Russia and France with tough opposition in their European Championships qualifying matches later this month. Even though few observers expect his unfancied side to do well enough to secure a berth in the Euro 2000 finals, Barsegian told AFP that the Armenian side will be ambitious in the remaining Group Four qualifiers. "We have a great chance to check our real strength in the matches against the world champions France and we will try to gain a positive experience out of it," the Armenian head coach said. "Our team will not be favourites in the matches against Russia and France but it does not mean those teams already have three points in their pocket," he said. "It will not be a piece of cake for them." Barsegian said he admired the playing styles of the French and Ukrainian teams and tipped those sides to qualify from Group Four for the final stages of the competition. Armenia face Russia on March 27 at Yerevan and play France in Paris on March 31.

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# Turk PM survives no-confidence vote

## Prosecutor seeks ban on Virtue

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit on Monday crushed an opposition attempt to topple him and stifled efforts led by the Islamist Virtue Party to delay April elections.

But the dramatic announcement of moves to ban Virtue, the largest group in parliament, could herald a spring of high political tension in Turkey.

A prosecutor who applied to the chief prosecutor's office on Monday to ban Virtue accused party supporters of aiming to set up a state based on Islamic principles.

Ecevit's victory in a censure motion ended 10 days of parliamentary drama.

Stocks edged up after the vote on hopes a strong government, including Ecevit, would be returned to conduct vital economic reforms.

"It happened as we expected," said Mesut Yilmaz, head of the Motherland Party, widely expected to form a government alliance with Ecevit's Democratic Left Party.

"This shows the anti-election front has been smothered."

A total of 236 deputies

voted for the censure motion, well short of the 276 needed to topple Ecevit.

The parliamentary speaker also refused to allow discussion of a Virtue-backed motion to delay the polls. He referred it to a parliamentary commission where it will likely die before Turks vote on April 18.

Virtue leaders were apparently using the censure vote and the motion to delay polls as a lever to win repeal of laws under which leading Islamists had been prosecuted and former Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan banned from politics for five years.

Commentators saw the hand of Erbakan behind Virtue's strategy.

Armed Forces Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kivrikoglu said last week a delay in polls would lead to chaos. He also warned that any bid to repeal laws cited by Virtue would be unacceptable.

The army, which sees itself as guardian of the country's secularist order, edged an Islamist-led government from power in 1997. Since then it has backed a crackdown on Islamist leaders.

That campaign reached

new heights on Monday when prosecutor Nuh Mete Yüksel applied to the country's hard-line chief prosecutor for a ban on Virtue.

Yüksel's application also cited meetings of Virtue members at Erbakan's house as evidence he maintains control of the party despite his ban.

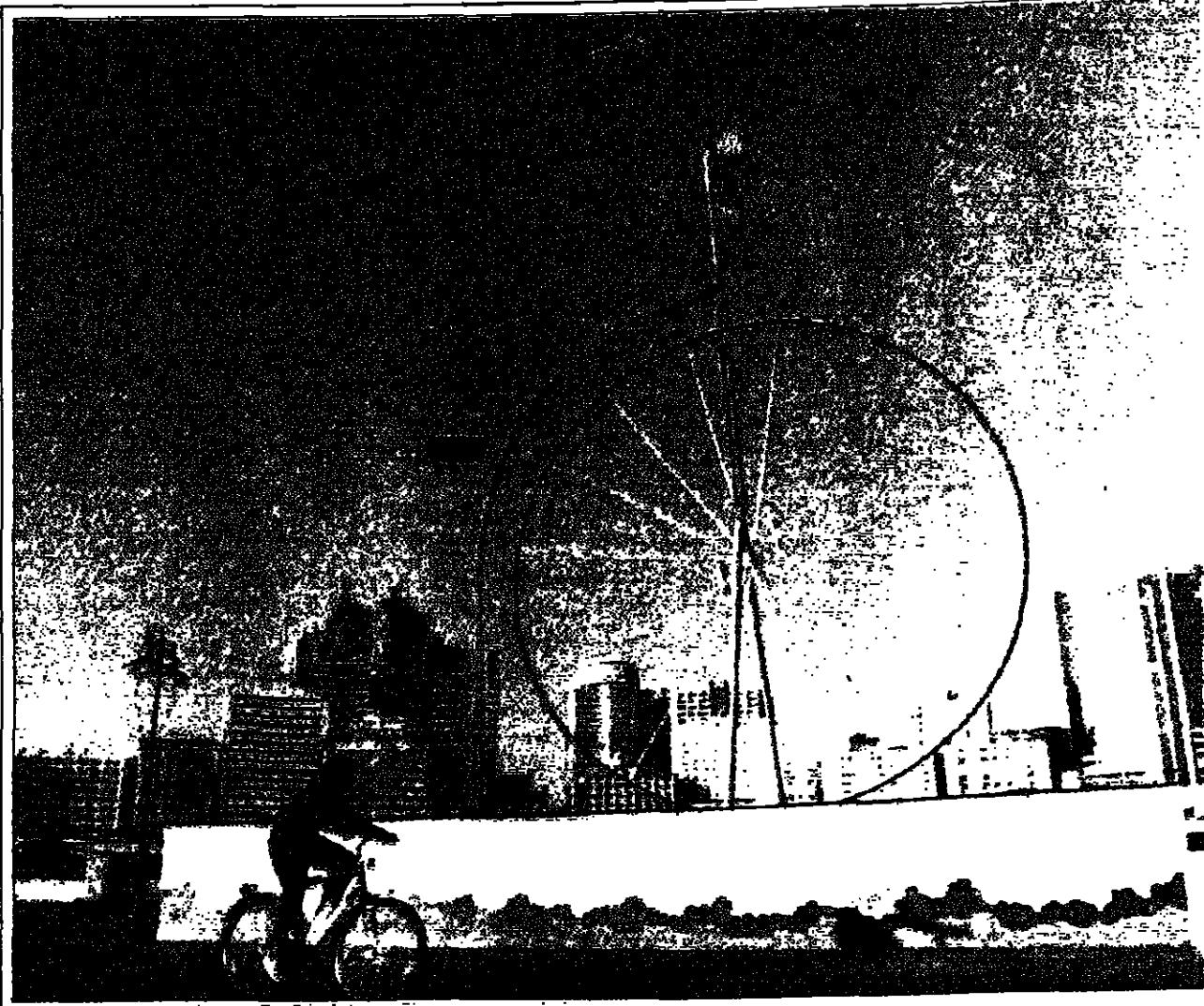
"Turkey will be the worse for this move. We did not expect this [ban application] during the election process," Abdullah Gül, a senior Virtue deputy, told Reuters.

Chief Prosecutor Vural Savas, who imposed a ban on Virtue's predecessor, Welfare, in 1998 must now decide whether to refer Virtue to the constitutional court.

Savas has at times suggested that Virtue, despite its more moderate image, is little more than a reincarnation of the banned Welfare Party.

Savas recently applied for a ban on the country's main legal Kurdish party, HADEP, arguing it had close links with captured guerrilla chief Öcalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

He sought leave to impose an interim ban on HADEP for the polls but was refused.



ON YOUR BIKE: A cyclist passes by a large bicycle, designed by a UAE engineer who claims it is the biggest in world, on display at the Dubai creek on Monday (Reuters photo)

## Pope will visit Holy Land in March 2000 — Israeli minister

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Pope John Paul II will make an historic first visit to the Holy Land for Millennium celebrations, Israel's tourism minister said in a press statement on Monday after meeting with the chairman of the Vatican's Millennium Committee.

Tourism Minister Moshe Katzav "received reports that the Pope will arrive in March 2000 for a visit in the Palestinian Authority and Israel," his spokeswoman Orly Doron said.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the trip "for now has not been set," adding that neither the date nor the itinerary has been worked out.

Israel TV said the Pope would arrive March 24 for a three-day visit to the region. Doron said she believed the Pope would spend three days in the region but would not confirm a date for the trip.

Earlier on Monday, Katzav held talks with Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, chairman of the Vatican's committee for the Millennium, to discuss Israel's preparations for hosting millions of pilgrims in the year 2000.

"The year 2000 is a celebration of the birth of Christ and his life in this land, therefore it is more than normal for him [the Pope] to come," Etchegaray said.

The cardinal, who spoke to reporters at a joint news con-

ference in Jerusalem on Monday, did not say that such a trip had been finalized however.

Israel has been pushing for a papal visit to boost millennium celebrations. Pope Paul VI went to the Holy Land in 1964. John Paul has expressed a keen desire to visit Jerusalem but the Pope's presence there would be sensitive because the Vatican and Israel differ over the future of the city, which is special to Jews, Christians and Muslims.

In February, John Paul accepted an invitation from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to visit Bethlehem, the site of Christ's birthplace. The Pope has long wanted to visit the Holy Land but has

deferred any journey because of the politically charged atmosphere of the region.

The Vatican has hinted recently that such a trip was being studied. Recently the Pope delivered an exceptional bull encouraging pilgrims to Rome for 2000 celebrations to continue on to the Holy Land.

Some three-four million pilgrims are expected to do so, and both Israel and the Palestinians are looking forward to an economic mini-boom.

Katzav said that Israel is cooperating with the Vatican and the Palestinian National Authority to ensure access for pilgrims to all Christian sites over the year 2000.



Woman receives card 47 years late

ISLAMABAD (R) — An 87-year-old Rawalpindi woman got a shock when she received a postcard from two dead sisters in Florida. The postcard was sent with a two-cent U.S. stamp in 1952 and reached her home near the Pakistani capital on March 8, the Urdu Jang newspaper said. The American-born woman, Florence, told the newspaper that her two sisters died years ago.

## Policeman torches patrol car in drunken brawl

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A Kuwait policeman on duty in this Gulf emirate where alcohol is outlawed torched his patrol car in a drunken brawl with his partner, a newspaper said Monday. After his partner struck him on the head with a whiskey bottle, causing serious injury, the policeman retaliated by setting their patrol car alight. Al Rai Al Aam said.

## Risk of lower IQs by sleeping less?

LONDON (R) — Britons are missing too much sleep and risk becoming mentally retarded, sleep researchers warned. Shift-work, longer working days and a "sleep-is-for-wimps" culture meant Britain was moving toward a 24-hour society. Professor Jim Horne of the Sleep Research Centre at Loughborough University told the Observer newspaper. Falling one hour short of eight hours sleep a night could temporarily knock one point off a person's IQ. Fifteen points could easily be lost in a week, which would make an average person with an IQ of about 100 "borderline retarded," according to the researchers. "Even in our leisure lives, sleep is seen as a waste of time. Young people go clubbing. An early night is not cool," said Horne.

## Welfare recipients thank rich for tax support

BLOEMENDAAL (AP) — It was a message they weren't likely to get from the government: Thanks for paying your taxes. Welfare recipients went door-to-door to the homes of some of Holland's most well-off taxpayers over the weekend, delivering handmade gifts as an expression of gratitude for their contributions to the public till. "We want to thank taxpayers, and presents are a fine reward," said 21-year-old Elena Simons, a student who thought up the idea. Seven Amsterdam welfare recipients, including several artists, travelled to the estate-studded coastal town of Bloemendaal, about 20 kilometres west of Amsterdam, to give away their own artwork and other gifts.

## 'Love' motels complain about Asian crisis

MANILA (AFP) — Motel operators in the Philippines complained to congress on Monday that the Asian financial crisis is wreaking havoc on business with fewer lovers visiting their establishments. The town and country chain of motels has had to resort to giving away a dish of crispy pig knuckles to couples who check into its luxury suites, its manager Legorio Espinoza told a public hearing of the house of representatives ways and means committee. Motel chains which could not keep pace with discounts have suffered lower occupancy rates, said Edmundo Las, owner of the Hotel Sogo group. Motel operators testified at the hearing to oppose a proposed law that would impose a value added tax on the establishments. The committee was told the Wise Inn chain offered low-cost 145-peso (\$3.71) rooms, but guests must leave after three hours.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel charges U.S. suspect with murder

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli prosecutor said on Monday she is setting aside six to nine months for the murder trial of a U.S. teenager accused of killing an acquaintance in Maryland in 1997. However, the trial of Samuel Sheinbein, 18, may conclude sooner if the defence goes ahead with plans not to contest the facts of the case. Defence attorney David Libai has told the court there will be no need to fly in witnesses from the United States. Sheinbein was indicted on a charge of first-degree murder on Monday, a day after Israel's high court made a final ruling against his extradition to the United States for trial. Prosecutor Hadassah Naor told the Associated Press that Sheinbein would be asked to enter a plea within a month and the trial itself would take from six to nine months. The state lists 25 prosecution witnesses, most from Maryland.

### Israeli police investigate bomb attack

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli police said on Monday they were investigating whether ultra-Orthodox Jews were responsible for a firebomb attack a day earlier on the home of an Israeli Jew who had adopted Christianity. Two firebombs were thrown at the home of the leader of Israel's tiny Messianic Jewish community on Sunday. Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said on Monday the victim was not injured but some damage was caused to his home. Ben-Ruby said police were investigating the possibility that ultra-Orthodox Jews had thrown the fire-bombs, but other avenues were also being explored. Ben-Ruby said.

### Israeli soldiers in 'friendly fire' incident

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Cobra attack helicopter inadvertently fired in the direction of infantry soldiers participating in a military training drill, but no one was hurt, Israel Radio said on Monday. The army said it was investigating the incident, but had no further comment. The radio said the helicopter was training in a firing zone in the southern Negev desert about two weeks ago, but that the pilot and his crew had not been informed that a group of soldiers was mapping the rugged turf at the same time. At one point, the helicopter crew opened fire as part of a shooting drill, and the soldiers on the ground ran for cover, said the radio's military affairs reporter, Carmela Menashe.

### Lebanese ask Israeli court for freedom

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Three Lebanese nationals held prisoner in Israel's occupied buffer zone in south Lebanon asked Israel's supreme court on Monday to order their release, court officials said. The three, backed by two Israeli human rights associations, complained in their petition that they had been tortured and denied medical treatment in the Khiam prison, which is run by the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA). The plaintiffs said their case lies within the Israeli court's jurisdiction because the SLA acts as a proxy militia for the Israeli army in south Lebanon. One of the three, Sliman Ramadan, was detained in 1985 and later had one of his legs amputated due to untreated wounds suffered at the time of his arrest, his lawyers said. The other two detainees are Mustafa Jawad Toubeh and his son Eli, who was only 14 when they were arrested in 1997.

### 8,000 reported detained during festival

ISTANBUL (R) — More than 8,000 people were detained across Turkey during the weekend's Kurdish spring festival, traditionally a focus of separatist protest, the Human Rights Association (IHD) said on Monday. Poor sections of Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, were the scene of violent clashes between riot police who fired into the air to disperse stone-throwing protesters gathered on Sunday to mark Nawroz, the Kurdish new year. In an often brutal armed campaign for self-rule Turkish officials banned public celebrations for Nawroz. The IHD said the clamp down had exacerbated Sunday's violence. "If local governors had allowed public celebrations to go ahead, this festival would not have become drenched in blood," lawyer and IHD spokeswoman Eren Keskin said.

### 'Blasts injure 25 at Turkey gas facility'

ANKARA (R) — Two explosions hit a gas facility in southern Turkey on Monday, injuring 25 people, three seriously, Anadolu news agency said. The cause of the blasts at the station used to fill gas canisters was not immediately clear. An ensuing fire had been brought under control by local fire services, the agency said. Turkey has been hit by a wave of violence since it captured Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Öcalan last month.

## Arab science works to be published after 700 years

CAIRO (AFP) — The first volume of an encyclopaedia written by the Arab doctor who discovered the circulatory system 700 years ago will be published in April, the project's researcher said.

Al Shamel Medical Encyclopaedia, written by Alaeeddin Abul Hassan Ibn Al Nafis, who was chief physician for Egypt and Syria in the 13th century, is being compiled and edited by Egyptian researcher Yousef Zeidan.

The project, which cost \$700,000, "will show the advanced level of Arab science in the fields of medicine and pharmacology during the golden age of Arab civilisation," Zeidan said.

"The encyclopaedia is the largest work on Arab scientific heritage," added Zeidan, 41, whose entire 10,000-page set will be completed in two years.

In an earlier work published in 1992, Zeidan proved with authentic manuscripts that Ben Al Nafis had discovered the circulatory system centuries before Briton William Harvey (1578-1657).

Ben Al Nafis, who practised in Cairo, had written a draft encyclopaedia in 300 volumes but only managed to publish 80 of them before his death. Two of the 80 volumes remained in Egypt while the rest found homes in various libraries around the world.

Zeidan spent the past 10 years assembling the manuscripts from libraries in Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Cambridge, Oxford and Stanford, and is publishing them in 40 volumes. The first volume will be published in Abu Dhabi.

## British television body suspends Kurdish station

LONDON (R) — A British television watchdog said on Monday it had ordered a Kurdish channel to cease broadcasting for 21 days after it showed calls for violence in Turkey.

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) said it had given London-based Med TV three weeks to convince it to allow them to continue broadcasting.

"The essence of these recent breaches is that the broadcasts contain calls to direct violence and criminal actions of various kinds," ITC's director of programmes and cable, Sarah Thane, told reporters.

The broadcasts were made after the arrest of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Öcalan last month, and feature messages from Kurdish leaders calling for acts of violence in Turkey.

Turkey says guerrillas of Öcalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) finance Med TV. The ITC said it received calls from Turkish authorities to revoke the licence, but the decision was made purely on legal grounds.

"We have a job given us by parliament to do, and we must do it and do it fairly," Thane

## Hillary Clinton opens health clinic in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton on Monday pledged \$34.4 million for healthcare in Egypt after inaugurating a U.S.-funded low-cost outpatient clinic here for the poor.

"First Lady Hillary Clinton announced \$20 million for family planning activities and \$14.4 million" to promote the health of mothers and babies in Upper Egypt, a U.S. embassy spokeswoman in Cairo told AFP.

Earlier on Monday, she met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his wife Suzanne, a staunch supporter of family planning and a leading force for all programmes in Egypt.

Clinton then toured the Khan Al Khalili bazaar in Islamic Cairo to acquaint herself with four small businesses funded by the United States, including three owned by women, and a youth centre also benefiting from U.S. funds.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has financed construction of Al Basatin clinic, the Telal Zeinhor youth centre and the small businesses.

Basatin and Telal Zeinhor are impoverished areas of northern Cairo near the capital's Christian and Muslim cemeteries.

Basatin clinic will provide

"integrated maternity and child care, family planning and reproductive health services" as well as immunisation for children, prenatal, delivery and post-natal assistance for mothers, a U.S. embassy statement said.

The "new horizons" Telal Zeinhor youth project was founded by the Evangelical Coptic Church in Cairo, with USAID funds, to provide literacy and leadership skills to girls and young women.

"The message is the same all over the world that women should have equal opportunity to be well educated and help solve problems in the family and community," Clinton told young women at the centre.

"If women are not educated society cannot develop," she said, adding that the United States was still grappling with the problem of illiteracy.

Since 1986, USAID has provided \$31 million for family planning activities and \$45 million for maternal and child health services in Egypt.

Clinton, accompanied by her daughter Chelsea, arrived Sunday afternoon in Cairo on her first visit to Egypt ahead of stops in Tunisia and Morocco to campaign for women's rights, healthcare for children and promote Arab-U.S. ties. She ends the tour April 1.

## Former Beirut hostage sues Iran for \$100 million

WASHINGTON (R) — Former Beirut hostage Terry Anderson filed a \$100-million lawsuit against Iran on Monday, accusing it of being responsible for sponsoring his kidnapping by a militant Islamic group 14 years ago.

Anderson's lawyer, Stuart Newberger, said the suit was filed in the U.S. District Court in Washington and would be translated into Farsi before being sent via diplomatic channels to the Iranian government.

"We hope that Iran will respond to the complaint, not simply because it is the right thing to do but because their presi-

dent has said lately that Iran wants to join the family of nations and that he respects the rule of law," Newberger told Reuters after filing the lawsuit.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and its ministry of information and security are named as defendants in the suit, which demands \$100 million in compensatory damages and unspecified punitive damages.

Anderson was chief Middle East correspondent for Associated Press news agency when he was kidnapped in Beirut in March 1985. He was held longer than any other American hostage and was

blindfolded and kept in chains for almost all his nearly seven years in captivity until his release in December 1991.

Newberger said the lawsuit also listed Anderson's wife, Madeleine Bossil and their daughter Sulome, 13, who was born three months after he was taken captive. They want redress for emotional distress and their long separation from Anderson.

Anderson can sue Iran in a U.S. court under laws which allow legal action against nations that allegedly sponsor terrorism that kills or injures U.S. citizens. Previous damages awards have proved

difficult to collect but Anderson might benefit from a law passed by Congress last October that requires the Treasury and State Departments to help recover damages from countries found guilty of sponsoring terrorism that maims or kills an American.

Anderson's lawsuit cites his captors as the Hizbollah (Party of God), a guerrilla group operating in Lebanon.

Speaking from his home in Athens, Ohio, Anderson told NBC's "Today" programme the Iranians had sponsored, paid and helped to plan and execute his kidnapping.